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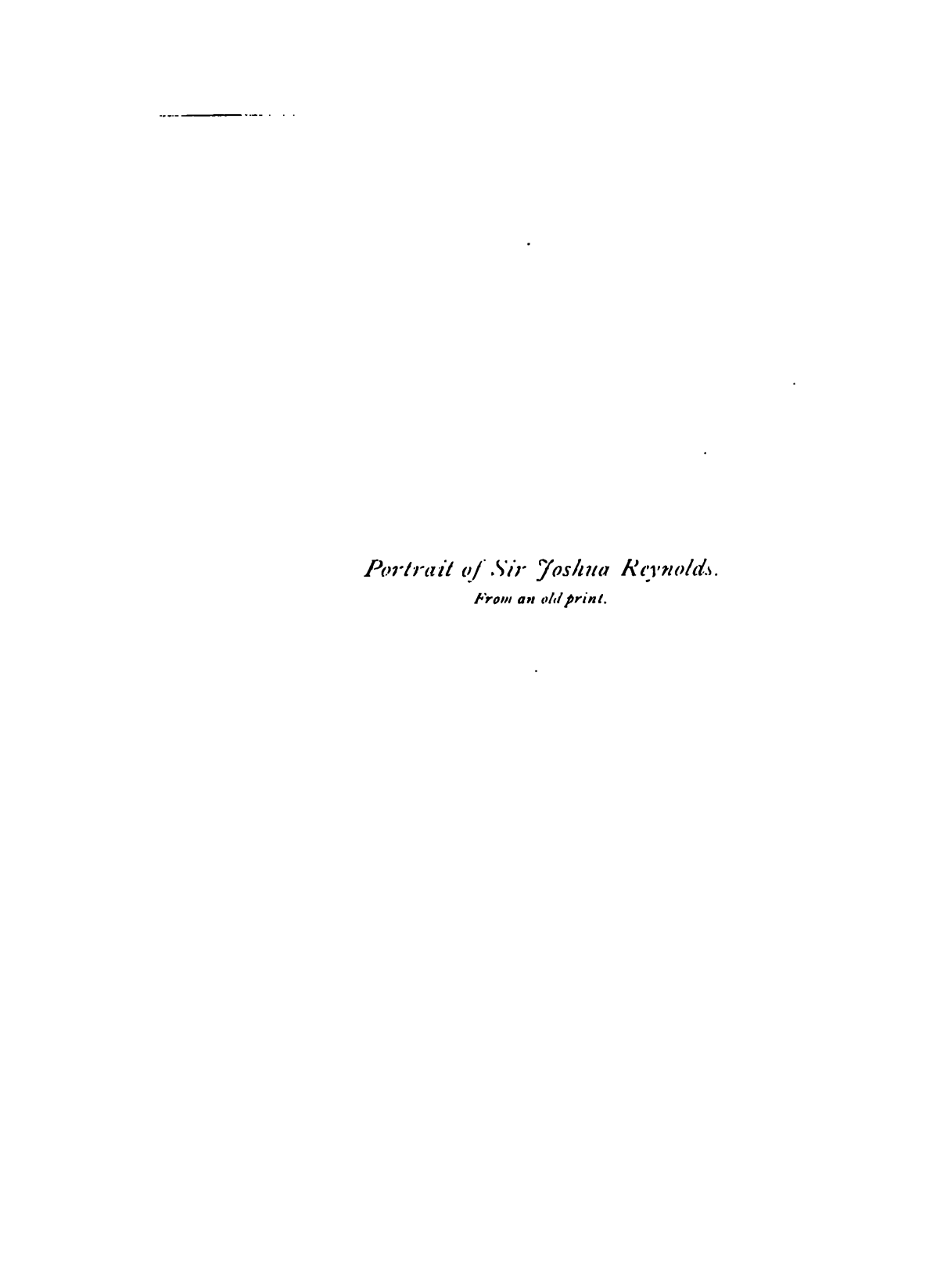

Portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

From an old print.

Holly Edition

Oliver Goldsmith and Margaret Davidson

By Washington Irving

Illustrated

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Oliver Goldsmith.

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Oliver Goldsmith

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Chapter I.

Dinner at the Royal Academy—The Rowley Controversy—Horace Walpole's Conduct to Chatterton—Johnson at Redcliffe Church—Goldsmith's *History of England*—Davies's Criticism—Letter to Bennet Langton.

ON St. George's day of this year (1771), the first annual banquet of the Royal Academy was held in the exhibition-room; the walls of which were covered with works of art, about to be submitted to public inspection. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who first suggested this elegant festival, presided in his official character; Drs. Johnson and Goldsmith, of course, were present, as Professors of the Academy; and, besides the Academicians, there was a large number of the most distinguished men of the day as guests.

Goldsmith on this occasion drew on himself the attention of the company by launching out with enthusiasm on the poems recently given to the world by Chatterton, as the works of an ancient author by the name of Rowley, discovered in the tower of Redcliffe Church, at Bristol. Goldsmith spoke of them with rapture, as a treasure of old English poetry. This immediately raised the question of their authenticity; they having been pronounced a forgery of Chatterton's. Goldsmith was warm for their being genuine. When he considered, he said, the merit of the poetry, the acquaintance with life and the human heart displayed in them, the antique quaintness of the language and the familiar knowledge of historical events of their supposed day, he could not believe it possible they could be the work of a boy of sixteen, of narrow education, and confined to the duties of an attorney's office. They must be the productions of Rowley.

Johnson, who was a stout unbeliever in Rowley, as he had been in Ossian, rolled in his chair and laughed at the enthusiasm of Goldsmith. Horace Walpole, who sat near by, joined in the laugh and jeer as soon as he found that the "*trouvaille*," as he called it, "of *his friend* Chatterton," was in question. This matter, which had excited the simple

admiration of Goldsmith, was no novelty to him, he said. "He might, had he pleased, have had the honor of ushering the great discovery to the learned world." And so he might, had he followed his first impulse in the matter, for he himself had been an original believer; had pronounced some specimen verses sent to him by Chatterton wonderful for their harmony and spirit; and had been ready to print them and publish them to the world with his sanction. When he found, however, that his unknown correspondent was a mere boy, humble in sphere and indigent in circumstances, and when Gray and Mason pronounced the poems forgeries, he had changed his whole conduct towards the unfortunate author, and by his neglect and coldness had dashed all his sanguine hopes to the ground.

Exulting in his superior discernment, this cold-hearted man of society now went on to divert himself, as he says, with the credulity of Goldsmith, whom he was accustomed to pronounce "an inspired idiot"; but his mirth was soon dashed, for on asking the poet what had become of this Chatterton, he was answered, doubtless in the feeling tone of one who had experienced the pangs of despondent genius, that "he had been to London, and had destroyed himself."

The reply struck a pang of self-reproach even to the cold heart of Walpole; a faint blush may have visited his cheek at his recent levity. "The persons of honor and veracity who were present," said he in after years, when he found it necessary to exculpate himself from the charge of heartless neglect of genius, "will attest with what surprise and concern I thus first heard of his death." Well might he feel concern. His cold neglect had doubtless contributed to madden the spirit of that youthful genius, and hurry him towards his untimely end; nor have all the excuses and palliations of Walpole's friends and admirers been ever able entirely to clear this stigma from his fame.

But what was there in the enthusiasm and credulity of honest Goldsmith, in this matter, to subject him to the laugh of Johnson or the raillery of Walpole? Granting the poems were not ancient, were they not good? Granting they were not the productions of Rowley, were they the less admirable for being the productions of Chatterton? Johnson himself testified to their merits and the genius of their composer, when, some years afterwards, he visited the tower of Redcliffe Church, and was shown the coffer in which poor Chatterton had pretended to find them. "This," said he, "is

the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. *It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things.*"

As to Goldsmith, he persisted in his credulity, and had subsequently a dispute with Dr. Percy on the subject, which interrupted and almost destroyed their friendship. After all, his enthusiasm was of a generous, poetic kind; the poems remain beautiful monuments of genius, and it is even now difficult to persuade one's self that they could be entirely the productions of a youth of sixteen.

In the month of August was published anonymously the *History of England*, on which Goldsmith had been for some time employed. It was in four volumes, compiled chiefly, as he acknowledged in the preface, from Rapin, Carte, Smollett, and Hume, "each of whom," says he, "has his admirers, in proportion as the reader is studious of political antiquities, fond of minute anecdote, a warm partisan, or a deliberate reasoner." It possessed the same kind of merit as his other historical compilations; a clear, succinct narrative, a simple, easy, and graceful style, and an agreeable arrangement of facts; but was not remarkable for either depth of observation or minute accuracy of research. Many passages were transferred, with little if any alteration, from his

Letters from a Nobleman to his Son on the same subject. The work, though written without party feeling, met with sharp animadversions from political scribblers. The writer was charged with being unfriendly to liberty, disposed to elevate monarchy above its proper sphere; a tool of ministers; one who would betray his country for a pension. Tom Davies, the publisher, the pompous little bibliopole of Russell Street, alarmed lest the book should prove unsalable, undertook to protect it by his pen, and wrote a long article in its defence in *The Public Advertiser*. He was vain of his critical effusion, and sought by nods and winks and innuendoes to intimate his authorship. "Have you seen," said he, in a letter to a friend, "'An Impartial Account of Goldsmith's *History of England*'? If you want to know who was the writer of it, you will find him in Russell Street;—*but mum!*"

The History, on the whole, however, was well received; some of the critics declared that English history had never before been so usefully, so elegantly, and agreeably epitomized, "and, like his other historical writings, it has kept its ground" in English literature.

Goldsmith had intended this summer, in company with Sir Joshua Reynolds, to pay a visit to Bennet Langton, at his seat in Lincoln-

shire, where he was settled in domestic life, having the year previously married the Countess Dowager of Rothes. The following letter, however, dated from his chambers in the Temple, on the 7th of September, apologizes for putting off the visit, while it gives an amusing account of his summer occupations and of the attacks of the critics on his *History of England*:

"My dear Sir,—

"Since I had the pleasure of seeing you last, I have been almost wholly in the country, at a farmer's house, quite alone, trying to write a comedy. It is now finished; but when or how it will be acted, or whether it will be acted at all, are questions I cannot resolve. I am therefore so much employed upon that, that I am under the necessity of putting off my intended visit to Lincolnshire for this season. Reynolds is just returned from Paris, and finds himself now in the case of a truant that must make up for his idle time by diligence. We have therefore agreed to postpone our journey till next summer, when we hope to have the honor of waiting upon Lady Rothes and you, and staying double the time of our late intended visit. We often meet, and never without remembering you. I see Mr.

Beauclerc very often both in town and country. He is now going directly forward to become a second Boyle: deep in chemistry and physics. Johnson has been down on a visit to a country parson, Doctor Taylor, and is returned to his old haunts at Mrs. Thrale's. Burke is a farmer, *en attendant* a better place; but visiting about too. Every soul is visiting about and merry but myself. And that is hard too, as I have been trying these three months to do something to make people laugh. There have I been strolling about the hedges, studying jests with a most tragical countenance. The *Natural History* is about half finished, and I will shortly finish the rest. God knows I am tired of this kind of finishing, which is but bungling work; and that not so much my fault as the fault of my scurvy circumstances. They begin to talk in town of the Opposition's gaining ground; the cry of liberty is still as loud as ever. I have published, or Davies has published for me, an *Abridgment of the History of England*, for which I have been a good deal abused in the newspapers, for betraying the liberties of the people. God knows I had no thought for or against liberty in my head; my whole aim being to make up a book of a decent size, that, as 'Squire Richard says, *would do no harm to nobody*. However, they

set me down as an arrant Tory, and consequently an honest man. When you come to look at any part of it, you 'll say that I am a sore Whig. God bless you, and with my most respectful compliments to her Ladyship, I remain, dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

" Oliver Goldsmith."

Chapter II.

Marriage of "Little Comedy"—Goldsmith at Barton—Practical Jokes at the Expense of his Toilet—Amusements at Barton—Aquatic Misadventure.

THOUGH Goldsmith found it impossible to break from his literary occupations to visit Bennet Langton, in Lincolnshire, he soon yielded to attractions from another quarter, in which somewhat of sentiment may have mingled. Miss Catharine Horneck, one of his beautiful fellow-travellers, otherwise called "Little Comedy," had been married in August to Henry William Bunbury, Esq., a gentleman of fortune, who has become celebrated for the humorous productions of his pencil. Goldsmith was shortly afterwards invited to pay the newly-married couple a visit at their seat, at Barton, in Suffolk. How could he resist such an invitation—especially as the Jessamy Bride would, of course, be among the guests? It is true, he was

hampered with work; he was still more hampered with debt; his accounts with Newbery were perplexed; but all must give way. New advances are procured from Newbery, on the promise of a new tale in the style of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, of which he showed him a few roughly sketched chapters; so, his purse replenished in the old way "by hook or by crook," he posted off to visit the bride at Barton. He found there a joyous household, and one where he was welcomed with affection. Garrick was there, and played the part of master of the revels, for he was an intimate friend of the master of the house. Notwithstanding early misunderstandings, a social intercourse between the actor and the poet had grown up of late, from meeting together continually in the same circle. A few particulars have reached us concerning Goldsmith while on this happy visit. We believe the legend has come down from Miss Mary Horneck herself. "While at Barton," she says, "his manners were always playful and amusing, taking the lead in promoting any scheme of innocent mirth, and usually prefacing the invitation with 'Come, now, let us play the fool a little.' At cards, which was commonly a round game, and the stake small, he was always the most noisy, effected great eagerness to win, and teased his

opponents of the gentler sex with continual jest and banter on their want of spirit in not risking the hazards of the game. But one of his most favorite enjoyments was to romp with the children, when he threw off all reserve, and seemed one of the most joyous of the group.

"One of the means by which he amused us was his songs, chiefly of the comic kind, which were sung with some taste and humor; several, I believe, were of his own composition, and I regret that I neither have copies, which might have been readily procured from him at the time, nor do I remember their names."

His perfect good-humor made him the object of tricks of all kinds; often in retaliation of some prank which he himself had played off. Unluckily, these tricks were sometimes made at the expense of his toilet, which, with a view peradventure to please the eye of a certain fair lady, he had again enriched to the impoverishment of his purse. "Being at all times gay in his dress," says this lady-like legend, "he made his appearance at the breakfast-table in a smart black silk coat with an expensive pair of ruffles; the coat someone contrived to soil, and it was sent to be cleansed; but, either by accident, or probably by design, the day after it came home, the sleeves became

daubed with paint, which was not discovered until the ruffles also, to his great mortification, were irretrievably disfigured.

"He always wore a wig, a peculiarity which those who judge of his appearance only from the fine poetical head of Reynolds would not suspect; and on one occasion some person contrived seriously to injure this important adjunct to dress. It was the only one he had in the country, and the misfortune seemed irreparable until the services of Mr. Bunbury's valet were called in, who, however, performed his functions so indifferently, that poor Goldsmith's appearance became the signal for a general smile."

This was wicked waggery, especially when it was directed to mar all the attempts of the unfortunate poet to improve his personal appearance, about which he was at all times dubiously sensitive, and particularly when among the ladies.

We have in a former chapter recorded his unlucky tumble into a fountain at Versailles, when attempting a feat of agility in presence of the fair Hornecks. Water was destined to be equally baneful to him on the present occasion. "Some difference of opinion," says the fair narrator, "having arisen with Lord Harrington respecting the depth of a pond, the

poet remarked that it was not so deep but that, if anything valuable was to be found at the bottom, he would not hesitate to pick it up. His lordship, after some banter, threw in a guinea ; Goldsmith, not to be outdone in this kind of bravado, in attempting to fulfil his promise without getting wet, accidentally fell in, to the amusement of all present ; but persevered, brought out the money, and kept it, remarking that he had abundant objects on which to bestow any further proofs of his lordship's whim or bounty."

All this is recorded by the beautiful Mary Horneck, the Jessamy Bride herself; but while she gives these amusing pictures of poor Goldsmith's eccentricities, and of the mischievous pranks played off upon him, she bears unqualified testimony, which we have quoted elsewhere, to the qualities of his head and heart, which shone forth in his countenance, and gained him the love of all who knew him.

Among the circumstances of this visit, vaguely called to mind by this fair lady in after years, was that Goldsmith read to her and her sister the first part of a novel which he had in hand. It was doubtless the manuscript mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, on which he had obtained an advance of money from Newbery to stave off some pressing debts,

and to provide funds for this very visit. It never was finished. The bookseller, when he came afterwards to examine the manuscript, objected to it as a mere narrative version of *The Good-Natured Man*. Goldsmith, too easily put out of conceit of his writings, threw it aside, forgetting that this was the very Newbery who kept his *Vicar of Wakefield* by him nearly two years, through doubts of its success. The loss of the manuscript is deeply to be regretted; it doubtless would have been properly wrought up before given to the press, and might have given us new scenes of life and traits of character, while it could not fail to bear traces of his delightful style. What a pity he had not been guided by the opinions of his fair listeners at Barton, instead of that of the astute Mr. Newbery!

when he felt that he had the worst of the argument!

The conversation turned upon ghosts. General Oglethorpe told the story of a Colonel Prendergast, an officer in the Duke of Marlborough's army, who predicted among his comrades that he should die on a certain day. The battle of Malplaquet took place on that day. The Colonel was in the midst of it, but came out unhurt. The firing had ceased, and his brother officers jested with him about the fallacy of his prediction. "The day is not over," replied he, gravely; "I shall die notwithstanding what you see." His words proved true. The order for a cessation of firing had not reached one of the French batteries, and a random shot from it killed the Colonel on the spot. Among his effects was found a pocket-book in which he had made a solemn entry, that Sir John Friend, who had been executed for high treason, had appeared to him, either in a dream or vision, and predicted that he would meet him on a certain day (the very day of the battle). Colonel Cecil, who took possession of the effects of Colonel Prendergast, and read the entry in the pocket-book, told this story to Pope, the poet, in the presence of General Oglethorpe.

This story, as related by the General, ap-

pears to have been well received, if not credited, by both Johnson and Goldsmith, each of whom had something to relate in kind. Goldsmith's brother, the clergyman in whom he had such implicit confidence, had assured him of his having seen an apparition. Johnson also had a friend, old Mr. Cave, the printer, at St. John's Gate, "an honest man, and a sensible man," who told him he had seen a ghost; he did not, however, like to talk of it, and seemed to be in great horror whenever it was mentioned. "And pray, sir," asked Boswell, "what did he say was the appearance?" "Why, sir, something of a shadowy being."

The reader will not be surprised at this superstitious turn in the conversation of such intelligent men, when he recollects that, but a few years before this time, all London had been agitated by the absurd story of the Cock-lane ghost; a matter which Dr. Johnson had deemed worthy of his serious investigation, and about which Goldsmith had written a pamphlet.

down his books in two return post-chaises. He used to say he believed the farmer's family thought him an odd character, similar to that in which the *Spectator* appeared to his landlady and her children; he was *The Gentleman*. Boswell tells us that he went to visit him at the place in company with Mickle, translator of the *Lusiad*. Goldsmith was not at home. Having a curiosity to see his apartment, however, they went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals scrawled upon the wall with a black lead-pencil.

The farm-house in question is still in existence, though much altered. It stands upon a gentle eminence in Hyde Lane, commanding a pleasant prospect towards Hendon. The room is still pointed out in which *She Stoops to Conquer* was written; a convenient and airy apartment, up one flight of stairs.

Some matter-of-fact traditions concerning the author were furnished, a few years since, by a son of the farmer, who was sixteen years of age at the time Goldsmith resided with his father. Though he had engaged to board with the family, his meals were generally sent to him in his room, in which he passed the most of his time, negligently dressed, with his shirt-collar open, busily engaged in writing. Sometimes, probably when in moods of composition,

he would wander into the kitchen, without noticing any one, stand musing with his back to the fire, and then hurry off again to his room, no doubt to commit to paper some thought which had struck him.

Sometimes he strolled about the fields, or was to be seen loitering and reading and musing under the hedges. He was subject to fits of wakefulness, and read much in bed; if not disposed to read, he still kept the candle burning; if he wished to extinguish it, and it was out of his reach, he flung his slipper at it, which would be found in the morning near the overturned candlestick and daubed with grease. He was noted here, as everywhere else, for his charitable feelings. No beggar applied to him in vain, and he evinced on all occasions great commiseration for the poor.

He had the use of the parlor to receive and entertain company, and was visited by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Hugh Boyd, the reputed author of *Junius*, Sir William Chambers, and other distinguished characters. He gave occasionally, though rarely, a dinner-party; and on one occasion, when his guests were detained by a thunder-shower, he got up a dance, and carried the merriment late into the night.

As usual, he was the promoter of hilarity among the young, and at one time took the

Hendon.

Redrawn from an engraving in Dr. Hughson's "Description of London."

which amiable act I returned with a very smart slap in the face; it must have been a tingler, for I left the marks of my little spiteful paw upon his cheek. This infantile outrage was followed by summary justice, and I was locked up by my father in an adjoining room, to undergo solitary imprisonment in the dark. Here I began to howl and scream most abominably. At length a friend appeared to extricate me from jeopardy; it was the good-natured Doctor himself, with a lighted candle in his hand, and a smile upon his countenance, which was still partially red from the effects of my petulance. I sulked and sobbed, and he fondled and soothed until I began to brighten. He seized the propitious moment, placed three hats upon the carpet, and a shilling under each; the shillings, he told me, were England, France, and Spain. 'Hey, presto, cockolorum!' cried the Doctor, and, lo! on uncovering the shillings, they were all found congregated under one. I was no politician at the time, and therefore might not have wondered at the sudden revolution which brought England, France, and Spain all under one crown; but, as I was also no conjurer, it amazed me beyond measure. From that time, whenever the Doctor came to visit my father,

"'I pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile';

a game of romps constantly ensued, and we were always cordial friends and merry playfellows."

Although Goldsmith made the Edgeware farm-house his headquarters for the summer, he would absent himself for weeks at a time on visits to Mr. Cradock, Lord Clare, and Mr. Langton, at their country-seats. He would often visit town, also, to dine and partake of the public amusements. On one occasion he accompanied Edmund Burke to witness a performance of the Italian Fantoccini or Puppets, in Panton Street; an exhibition which had hit the caprice of the town, and was in a great vogue. The puppets were set in motion by wires, so well concealed as to be with difficulty detected. Boswell, with his usual obtuseness with respect to Goldsmith, accuses him of being jealous of the puppets! "When Burke," said he, "praised the dexterity with which one of them tossed a pike, 'Pshaw,' said Goldsmith *with some warmth*, 'I can do it better myself.'" "The same evening," adds Boswell, "when supping at Burke's lodgings, he broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets."

Goldsmith jealous of puppets! This even passes in absurdity Boswell's charge upon him

of being jealous of the beauty of the two Miss Hornecks.

The Panton Street puppets were destined to be a source of further amusement to the town, and of annoyance to the little autocrat of the stage. Foote, the Aristophanes of the English drama, who was always on the alert to turn every subject of popular excitement to account, seeing the success of the Fantoccini, gave out that he should produce a Primitive Puppet Show at the Haymarket, to be entitled, *The Handsome Chambermaid, or Piety in Pattens;* intended to burlesque the *sentimental comedy* which Garrick still maintained at Drury Lane. The idea of a play to be performed in a regular theatre by puppets excited the curiosity and talk of the town. "Will your puppets be as large as life, Mr. Foote?" demanded a lady of rank. "Oh, no, my lady," replied Foote, "*not much larger than Garrick.*"

Chapter V.

Broken Health—Dissipation and Debts—*The Irish Widow*—Practical Jokes—Scrub—A Misquoted Pun—Malagrida—Goldsmith Proved to Be a Fool—Distressed Ballad-Singers—The Poet at Ranelagh.

GOLDSMITH returned to town in the autumn (1772), with his health much disordered. His close fits of sedentary application, during which he in a manner tied himself to the mast, had laid the seeds of a lurking malady in his system, and produced a severe illness in the course of the summer. Town-life was not favorable to the health either of body or mind. He could not resist the siren voice of temptation, which, now that he had become a notoriety, assailed him on every side. Accordingly we find him launching away in a career of social dissipation; dining and supping out; at clubs, at routs, at theatres; he is a guest with Johnson at the Thrales, and an object of Mrs. Thrale's

lively sallies; he is a lion at Mrs. Vesey's and Mrs. Montagu's, where some of the high-bred blue-stockings pronounce him a "wild genius," and others, peradventure, a "wild Irishman." In the meantime his pecuniary difficulties are increasing upon him, conflicting with his proneness to pleasure and expense, and contributing by the harassment of his mind to the wear and tear of his constitution. His *Animated Nature*, though not finished, has been entirely paid for, and the money spent. The money advanced by Garrick on Newbery's note, still hangs over him as a debt. The tale on which Newbery had loaned from two to three hundred pounds previous to the excursion to Barton, has proved a failure. The bookseller is urgent for the settlement of his complicated account; the perplexed author has nothing to offer him in liquidation but the copyright of the comedy which he has in his portfolio; "Though, to tell you the truth, Frank," said he, "there are great doubts of its success." The offer was accepted, and, like bargains wrung from Goldsmith in times of emergency, turned out a golden speculation to the bookseller.

In this way Goldsmith went on "overrunning the constable," as he termed it; spending everything in advance; working with an

overtasked head and weary heart to pay for past pleasures and past extravagance, and at the same time incurring new debts, to perpetuate his struggles and darken his future prospects. While the excitement of society and the excitement of composition conspire to keep up a feverishness of the system, he has incurred an unfortunate habit of quacking himself with James's powders, a fashionable panacea of the day.

A farce, produced this year by Garrick, and entitled *The Irish Widow*, perpetuates the memory of practical jokes played off a year or two previously upon the alleged vanity of poor, simple-hearted Goldsmith. He was one evening at the house of his friend Burke, when he was beset by a tenth muse, an Irish widow and authoress, just arrived from Ireland, full of brogue and blunders, and poetic fire and rantipole gentility. She was soliciting subscriptions for her poems, and assailed Goldsmith for his patronage—the great Goldsmith, her countryman, and of course her friend. She overpowered him with eulogiums on his own poems, and then read some of her own, with vehemence of tone and gesture, appealing continually to the great Goldsmith to know how he relished them.

Poor Goldsmith did all that a kind-hearted

Portrait of David Garrick.

From a design by N. Dance.

ing and regarding a crowd which was staring and shouting at some foreign ladies in the window of a hotel. "Observe Goldsmith," said Burke to O'Moore, "and mark what passes between us at Sir Joshua's." They passed on and reached there before him. Burke received Goldsmith with affected reserve and coldness; being pressed to explain the reason, "Really," said he, "I am ashamed to keep company with a person who could act as you have just done in the Square." Goldsmith protested he was ignorant of what was meant. "Why," said Burke, "did you not exclaim, as you were looking up at those women, what stupid beasts the crowd must be for staring with such admiration at those *painted Jezebels*, while a man of your talents passed by unnoticed?" "Surely, surely, my dear friend," cried Goldsmith, with alarm, "surely I did not say so?" "Nay," replied Burke, "if you had not said so, how should I have known it?" "That 's true," answered Goldsmith. "I am very sorry —it was very foolish: *I do recollect that something of the kind passed through my mind, but I did not think I had uttered it.*"

It is proper to observe that these jokes were played off by Burke before he had attained the full eminence of his social position, and that he may have felt privileged to take liberties

with Goldsmith as his countryman and college associate. It is evident, however, that the peculiarities of the latter, and his guileless simplicity, made him a butt for the broad waggery of some of his associates; while others more polished, though equally perfidious, were on the watch to give currency to his bulls and blunders.

The Stratford jubilee, in honor of Shakespeare, where Boswell had made a fool of himself, was still in everyone's mind. It was sportively suggested that a fête should be held at Litchfield in honor of Johnson and Garrick, and that *The Beau's Stratagem* should be played by the members of the Literary Club. "Then," exclaimed Goldsmith, "I shall certainly play Scrub. I should like of all things to try my hand at that character." The unwary speech, which anyone else might have made without comment, has been thought worthy of record as whimsically characteristic. Beauclerc was extremely apt to circulate anecdotes at his expense, founded perhaps on some trivial incident, but dressed up with the embellishments of his sarcastic brain. One relates to a venerable dish of peas, served up at Sir Joshua's table, which should have been green, but were any other color. A wag suggested to Goldsmith in a whisper, that they should be

sent to Hammersmith, as that was the way to *turn-'em-green* (Turnham Green). Goldsmith, delighted with the pun, endeavored to repeat it at Burke's table, but missed the point. "That is the way to *make* 'em green," said he. Nobody laughed. He perceived that he was at fault. "I mean that is the *road* to turn 'em green." A dead pause and a stare ;—"whereupon," adds Beauclere, "he started up disconcerted and abruptly left the table." This is evidently one of Beauclerc's caricatures.

On another occasion the poet and Beauclerc were seated at the theatre next to Lord Shelbourne, the minister, whom political writers thought proper to nickname Malagrida. "Do you know," said Goldsmith to his lordship, in the course of conversation, "that I never could conceive why they call you Malagrida, *for* Malagrida was a very good sort of man." This was too good a trip of the tongue for Beauclerc to let pass: he serves it up in his next letter to Lord Charlemont, as a specimen of a mode of turning a thought the wrong way, peculiar to the poet; he makes merry over it with his witty and sarcastic compeer, Horace Walpole, who pronounces it "a picture of Goldsmith's whole life." Dr. Johnson alone, when he hears it bandied about as Goldsmith's last blunder, growls forth a friendly defence: "Sir," said he,

"it was a mere blunder in emphasis. He meant to say, I wonder they should use Malagrida as a term of reproach." Poor Goldsmith! On such points he was ever doomed to be misinterpreted. Rogers, the poet, meeting in times long subsequent with a survivor from those days, asked him what Goldsmith really was in conversation. The old conventional character was too deeply stamped in the memory of the veteran to be effaced. "Sir," replied the old wiseacre, "*he was a fool.* The right word never came to him. If you gave him back a bad shilling, he 'd say, Why, it 's as good a shilling as ever was *born*. You know he ought to have said *coined*. *Coined*, sir, never entered his head. *He was a fool, sir.*"

We have so many anecdotes in which Goldsmith's simplicity is played upon, that it is quite a treat to meet with one in which he is represented playing upon the simplicity of others, especially when the victim of his joke is the "Great Cham" himself, whom all others are disposed to hold so much in awe. Goldsmith and Johnson were supping cosily together at a tavern in Dean Street, Soho, kept by Jack Roberts, a singer at Drury Lane, and protégé of Garrick's. Johnson delighted in these gastronomical *tête-à-têtes*, and was expatiating in high good-humor on a dish of rumps and kid-

neys, the veins of his forehead swelling with the ardor of mastication. "These," said he, "are pretty little things; but a man must eat a great many of them before he is filled." "Aye; but how many of them," asked Goldsmith, with affected simplicity, "would reach to the moon?" "To the moon! Ah, sir, that, I fear, exceeds your calculation." "Not at all, sir; I think I could tell." "Pray, then, sir, let us hear." "Why, sir, one, *if it were long enough!*" Johnson growled for a time at finding himself caught in such a trite schoolboy trap. "Well, sir," cried he at length. "I have deserved it. I should not have provoked so foolish an answer by so foolish a question."

Among the many incidents related as illustrative of Goldsmith's vanity and envy is one which occurred one evening when he was in a drawing-room with a party of ladies, and a ballad-singer under the window struck up his favorite song of "Sally Salisbury." "How miserably this woman sings!" exclaimed he. "Pray, Doctor," said the lady of the house, "could you do it better?" "Yes, madam, and the company shall be judges." The company, of course, prepared to be entertained by an absurdity; but their smiles were wellnigh turned to tears, for he acquitted himself with a skill

and pathos that drew universal applause. He had, in fact, a delicate ear for music, which had been jarred by the false notes of the ballad-singer; and there were certain pathetic ballads, associated with recollections of his childhood, which were sure to touch the springs of his heart. We have another story of him, connected with ballad-singing, which is still more characteristic. He was one evening at the house of Sir William Chambers, in Berners Street, seated at a whist-table with Sir William, Lady Chambers, and Baretti, when all at once he threw down his cards, hurried out of the room and into the street. He returned in an instant, resumed his seat, and the game went on. Sir William, after a little hesitation, ventured to ask the cause of his retreat, fearing he had been overcome by the heat of the room. "Not at all," replied Goldsmith; "but in truth I could not bear to hear that unfortunate woman in the street, half singing, half sobbing, for such tones could only arise from the extremity of distress: her voice grated painfully on my ear and jarred my frame, so that I could not rest until I had sent her away." It was in fact a poor ballad-singer whose cracked voice had been heard by others of the party, but without having the same effect on their sensibilities. It was the reality of his fictitious

scene in the story of the *Man in Black;* wherein he describes a woman in rags, with one child in her arms and another on her back, attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. "A wretch," he adds, "who in the deepest distress, still aimed at good-humor, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding." The *Man in Black* gave the poor woman all that he had—a bundle of matches. Goldsmith, it is probable, sent his ballad-singer away rejoicing, with all the money in his pocket.

Ranelagh was at that time greatly in vogue as a place of public entertainment. It was situated near Chelsea; the principal room was a Rotunda of great dimensions, with an orchestra in the centre, and tiers of boxes all round. It was a place to which Johnson resorted occasionally. "I am a great friend to public amusements," said he, "for they keep people from vice." * Goldsmith was equally a friend to

* "Alas, sir!" said Johnson, speaking, when in another mood, of grand houses, fine gardens, and splendid places of public amusement; "alas, sir! these are only struggles for happiness. When I first entered Ranelagh it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced any-

them, though perhaps not altogether on such moral grounds. He was particularly fond of masquerades, which were then exceedingly popular, and got up at Ranelagh with great expense and magnificence. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had likewise a taste for such amusements, was sometimes his companion; at other times he went alone; his peculiarities of person and manner would soon betray him, whatever might be his disguise, and he would be singled out by wags, acquainted with his foibles, and more successful than himself in maintaining their incognito, as a capital subject to be played upon. Some, pretending not to know him, would decry his writings, and praise those of his contemporaries; others would laud his verses to the skies, but purposely misquote and burlesque them; others would annoy him with parodies; while one young lady, whom he was teasing, as he supposed, with great success and infinite humor, silenced his rather boisterous laughter by quoting his own line about "the loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind." On

where else. But, as Xerxes wept when he reviewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think."

one occasion he was absolutely driven out of the house by the persevering jokes of a wag, whose complete disguise gave him no means of retaliation.

His name appearing in the newspapers among the distinguished persons present at one of these amusements, his old enemy, Kenrick, immediately addressed to him a copy of anonymous verses, to the following purport.

TO DR. GOLDSMITH.

ON SEEING HIS NAME IN THE LIST OF MUMMERS AT THE LATE MASQUERADE.

" How widely different, Goldsmith, are the ways
Of Doctors now, and those of ancient days!
Theirs taught the truth in academic shades,
Ours in lewd hops and midnight masquerades.
So changed the times! say, philosophic sage,
Whose genius suits so well this tasteful age,
Is the Pantheon, late a sink obscene,
Become the fountain of chaste Hippocrene?
Or do thy moral numbers quaintly flow,
Inspired by th' *Aganippe* of Soho?
Do wisdom's sons gorge cates and vermicelli,
Like beastly Bickerstaffe or bothering Kelly?
Or art thou tired of th' undeserved applause,
Bestowed on bards affecting Virtue's cause?
Is this the good that makes the humble vain,
The good philosophy should not disdain?

If so, let pride dissemble all it can,
A modern sage is still much less than man."

Goldsmith was keenly sensitive to attacks of the kind, and meeting Kenrick at the Chapter Coffee-House, called him to sharp account for taking such liberty with his name, and calling his morals in question, merely on account of his being seen at a place of general resort and amusement. Kenrick shuffled and sneaked, protesting that he meant nothing derogatory to his private character. Goldsmith let him know, however, that he was aware of his having more than once indulged in attacks of this dastard kind, and intimated that another such outrage would be followed by personal chastisement.

Kenrick, having played the craven in his presence, avenged himself as soon as he was gone by complaining of his having made a wanton attack upon him, and by making coarse comments upon his writings, conversation, and person.

The scurrilous satire of Kenrick, however unmerited, may have checked Goldsmith's taste for masquerades. Sir Joshua Reynolds, calling on the poet one morning, found him walking about his room in somewhat of a reverie, kicking a bundle of clothes before him

like a football. It proved to be an expensive masquerade dress, which he said he had been fool enough to purchase, and as there was no other way of getting the worth of his money, he was trying to take it out in exercise.

Chapter VI.

Invitation to Christmas—The Spring-Velvet Coat—The Haymaking Wig—The Mischances of Loo—The Fair Culprit—A Dance with the Jessamy Bride.

FROM the feverish dissipations of town, Goldsmith is summoned away to partake of the genial dissipations of the country. In the month of December, a letter from Mrs. Bunbury invites him down to Barton, to pass the Christmas holidays. The letter is written in the usual playful vein which marks his intercourse with this charming family. He is to come in his "smart spring-velvet coat," to bring a new wig to dance with the haymakers in, and above all to follow the advice of herself and her sister (the Jessamy Bride), in playing loo. This letter, which plays so archly, yet kindly, with some of poor Goldsmith's peculiarities, and bespeaks such real ladylike regard for him, requires a word or two of annotation. The

spring-velvet suit alluded to appears to have been a gallant adornment (somewhat the style of the famous bloom-colored coat), in which Goldsmith had figured in the preceding month of May—the season of blossoms: for, on the 21st of that month, we find the following entry in the chronicle of Mr. William Filby, tailor: "*To your blue velvet suit*, £21 10*s*. 9*d*." Also, about the same time, a suit of livery and a crimson collar for the serving-man. Again we hold the Jessamy Bride responsible for this gorgeous splendor of wardrobe.

The new wig no doubt is a bag-wig and solitaire, still highly the mode, and in which Goldsmith is represented as figuring when in full dress equipped with his sword.

As to the dancing with the haymakers, we presume it alludes to some gambol of the poet, in the course of his former visit to Barton; when he ranged the fields and lawns a chartered libertine, and tumbled into the fish-ponds.

As to the suggestions about loo, they are in sportive allusion to the Doctor's mode of playing that game in their merry evening parties; affecting the desperate gambler and easy dupe; running counter to all rule; making extravagant ventures; reproaching all

others with cowardice ; dashing at all hazards at the pool, and getting himself completely loo'd, to the great amusement of the company. The drift of the fair sister's advice was most probably to tempt him on, and then leave him in the lurch.

With these comments we subjoin Goldsmith's reply to Mrs. Bunbury, a fine piece of off-hand, humorous writing, which has but in late years been given to the public, and which throws a familiar light on the social circle at Barton.

"MADAM,—I read your letter with all that allowance which critical candor could require, but after all find so much to object to, and so much to raise my indignation, that I cannot help giving it a serious answer.—I am not so ignorant, madam, as not to see there are many sarcasms contained in it, and solecisms also. (Solecism is a word that comes from the town of Soleis in Attica, among the Greeks, built by Solon, and applied as we use the word Kidderminster for curtains from a town also of that name ;—but this is learning you have no taste for !)—I say, madam, that there are many sarcasms in it, and solecisms also. But not to seem an ill-natured critic, I 'll take leave to quote your own words, and give you

my remarks upon them as they occur. You begin as follows:

"'I hope, my good Doctor, you soon will be here,
And your spring-velvet coat very smart will appear,
To open our ball the first day of the year.'

"Pray, madam, where did you ever find the epithet 'good' applied to the title of doctor? Had you called me 'learned doctor,' or 'grave doctor,' or 'noble doctor,' it might be allowable, because they belong to the profession. But, not to cavil at trifles, you talk of my 'spring-velvet coat,' and advise me to wear it the first day in the year, that is, in the middle of winter!—a spring-velvet coat in the middle of winter!!! That would be a solecism indeed! and yet to increase the inconsistency, in another part of your letter you call me a beau. Now, on one side or other, you must be wrong. If I am a beau, I can never think of wearing a spring velvet in winter; and if I am not a beau, why then, that explains itself. But let me go on to your two next strange lines:

"'And bring with you a wig, that is modish and gay,
To dance with the girls that are makers of hay.'

"The absurdity of making hay at Christmas you yourself seem sensible of: you say

your sister will laugh; and so indeed she well may! The Latins have an expression for a contemptuous kind of laughter, 'naso contemnere adunco'; that is, to laugh with a crooked nose. She may laugh at you in the manner of the ancients if she thinks fit. But now I come to the most extraordinary of all extraordinary propositions,—which is, to take your and your sister's advice in playing at loo. The presumption of the offer raises my indignation beyond the bounds of prose; it inspires me at once with verse and resentment. I take advice! and from whom? You shall hear.

"First, let me suppose, what may shortly be true,
The company set, and the word to be Loo:
All smirking, and pleasant, and big with adventure,
And ogling the stake which is fix'd in the centre.
Round and round go the cards, while I inwardly
damn
At never once finding a visit from Pam.
I lay down my stake, apparently cool,
While the harpies about me all pocket the pool.
I fret in my gizzard, yet, cautious and sly,
I wish all my friends may be bolder than I:
Yet still they sit snug, not a creature will aim
By losing their money to venture at fame.
'T is in vain that at niggardly caution I scold,
'T is in vain that I flatter the brave and the bold:
All play their own way, and they think me an
ass, . . .

'What does Mrs. Bunbury?' . . . 'I, sir? I pass,'
'Pray what does Miss Horneck? take courage, come do.'
'Who, I?—let me see, sir, why I must pass too.'
Mr. Bunbury frets, and I fret like the devil,
To see them so cowardly, lucky, and civil.
Yet still I sit snug, and continue to sigh on,
Till, made by my losses as bold as a lion,
I venture at all, while my avarice regards
The whole pool as my own. . . . 'Come, give me five cards.'
'Well done!' cry the ladies; 'ah, Doctor, that's good!
The pool 's very rich, . . . ah! the Doctor is loo'd!'
Thus foil'd in my courage, on all sides perplext,
I ask for advice from the lady that's next:
'Pray, ma'am, be so good as to give your advice;
Don't you think the best way is to venture for 't twice?'
'I advise,' cries the lady, 'to try it, I own. . . .
Ah! the Doctor is loo'd! Come, Doctor, put down.'
Thus, playing, and playing, I still grow more eager,
And so bold, and so bold, I 'm at last a bold beggar.
Now, ladies, I ask, if law-matters you 're skill'd in,
Whether crimes such as yours should not come before Fielding:
For giving advice that is not worth a straw,
May well be call'd picking of pockets in law;
And picking of pockets, with which I now charge ye,
Is, by quinto Elizabeth, Death without Clergy.
What justice, when both to the Old Bailey brought!

By the gods, I 'll enjoy it, tho' 't is but in thought!
Both are placed at the bar, with all proper decorum,
With bunches of fennel, and nosegays before 'em;
Both cover their faces with mobs and all that,
But the judge bids them, angrily, take of their hat.
When uncover'd a buzz of inquiry runs round,
'Pray what are their crimes?' . . . 'They 've
been pilfering found.'
'But, pray, who have they pilfer'd?' . . . 'A
doctor, I hear.'
'*What, yon solemn-faced odd-looking man that stands near?*'
'The same.' . . . 'What a pity! how does it surprise one,
Two handsomer culprits I never set eyes on!'
Then their friends all come round me with cringing and leering,
To melt me to pity, and soften my swearing.
First Sir Charles advances with phrases well-strung,
'Consider, dear Doctor, the girls are but young.'
'The younger the worse,' I return him again,
'It shows that their habits are all dyed in grain.'
'But then they 're so handsome, one's bosom it grieves.'
'What signifies *handsome*, when people are thieves?'
'But where is your justice? their cases are hard.'
'What signifies *justice?* I want the *reward*.

"'There 's the parish of Edmonton offers forty pounds; there 's the parish of St. Leonard Shoreditch offers forty pounds; there 's the parish of Tyburn, from the Hog-in-the-pound to St. Giles's watch-house, offers forty

pounds,—I shall have all that if I convict them!'—

"'But consider their case, . . it may yet be your own!
And see how they kneel! Is your heart made of stone?'
This moves: . . so at last I agree to relent,
For ten pounds in hand, and ten pounds to be spent.'

"I challenge you all to answer this: I tell you, you cannot. It cuts deep. But now for the rest of the letter: and next—but I want room—so I believe I shall battle the rest out at Barton some day next week.—I don't value you all!

"O. G."

We regret that we have no record of this Christmas visit to Barton; that the poet had no Boswell to follow at his heels, and take note of all his sayings and doings. We can only picture him in our minds, casting off all care; enacting the lord of misrule; presiding at the Christmas revels; providing all kinds of merriment; keeping the card-table in an uproar, and finally opening the ball on the first day of the year in his spring-velvet suit, with the Jessamy Bride for a partner.

Chapter VII.

Theatrical Delays—Negotiations with Colman—Letter to Garrick—Croaking of the Manager—Naming of the Play—*She Stoops to Conquer*—Foote's Primitive Puppet-Show, *Piety in Pattens*—First Performance of the Comedy—Agitation of the Author—Success—Colman Squibbed out of Town.

THE gay life depicted in the two last chapters, while it kept Goldsmith in a state of continual excitement, aggravated the malady which was impairing his constitution; yet his increasing perplexities in money-matters drove him to the dissipation of society as a relief from solitary care. The delays of the theatre added to those perplexities. He had long since finished his new comedy, yet the year 1772 passed away without his being able to get it on the stage. No one, uninitiated in the interior of a theatre, that little world of traps and trickery, can have any idea of the obstacles and perplexities

multiplied in the way of the most eminent and successful author by the mismanagement of managers, the jealousies and intrigues of rival authors, and the fantastic and impertinent caprices of actors. A long and baffling negotiation was carried on between Goldsmith and Colman, the manager of Covent Garden; who retained the play in his hands until the middle of January (1773) without coming to a decision. The theatrical season was rapidly passing away, and Goldsmith's pecuniary difficulties were augmenting and pressing on him. We may judge of his anxiety by the following letter:

"*To George Colman, Esq.*

"DEAR SIR,—

"I entreat you 'll relieve me from that state of suspense in which I have been kept for a long time. Whatever objections you have made or shall make to my play, I will endeavor to remove and not argue about them. To bring in any new judges either of its merits or faults I can never submit to. Upon a former occasion, when my other play was before Mr. Garrick, he offered to bring me before Mr. Whitehead's tribunal, but I refused the proposal with indignation: I hope I shall not experience

as harsh treatment from you as from him. I have, as you know, a large sum of money to make up shortly; by accepting my play, I can readily satisfy my creditor that way; at any rate, I must look about to some certainty to be prepared. For God's sake take the play, and let us make the best of it, and let me have the same measure, at least, which you have given as bad plays as mine.

"I am, your friend and servant,

"OLIVER GOLDSMITH."

Colman returned the manuscript with the blank sides of the leaves scored with disparaging comments, and suggested alterations, but with the intimation that the faith of the theatre should be kept, and the play acted notwithstanding. Goldsmith submitted the criticisms to some of his friends, who pronounced them trivial, unfair, and contemptible, and intimated that Colman, being a dramatic writer himself, might be actuated by jealousy. The play was then sent, with Colman's comments written on it, to Garrick; but he had scarce sent it when Johnson interfered, represented the evil that might result from an apparent rejection of it by Covent Garden, and undertook to go forthwith to Colman, and have a talk with him on the subject. Goldsmith,

therefore, penned the following note to Garrick:

"DEAR SIR,—

"I ask many pardons for the trouble I gave you yesterday. Upon more mature deliberation and the advice of a sensible friend, I began to think it indelicate in me to throw upon you the odium of confirming Mr. Colman's sentence. I therefore request you will send my play back by my servant; for having been assured of having it acted at the other house, though I confess yours in every respect more to my wish, yet it would be folly in me to forego an advantage which lies in my power of appealing from Mr. Colman's opinion to the judgment of the town. I entreat, if not too late, you will keep this affair a secret for some time.

"I am, dear sir, you very humble servant,

"OLIVER GOLDSMITH."

The negotiation of Johnson with the manager of Covent Garden was effective. "Colman," he says, "was prevailed on at last, by much solicitation, nay, a kind of force," to bring forward the comedy. Still the manager was ungenerous, or at least indiscreet enough to express his opinion that it would not reach

a second representation. The plot, he said, was bad, and the interest not sustained; "it dwindled, and dwindled, and at last went out like the snuff of a candle." The effect of his croaking was soon apparent within the walls of the theatre. Two of the most popular actors, Woodward and Gentleman Smith, to whom the parts of *Tony Lumpkin* and *Young Marlow* were assigned, refused to act them; one of them alleging, in excuse, the evil predictions of the manager. Goldsmith was advised to postpone the performance of his play until he could get these important parts well supplied. "No," said he, "I would sooner that my play were damned by bad players than merely saved by good acting."

Quick was substituted for Woodward in *Tony Lumpkin*, and Lee Lewis, the harlequin of the theatre, for Gentleman Smith in *Young Marlow;* and both did justice to their parts.

Great interest was taken by Goldsmith's friends in the success of his piece. The rehearsals were attended by Johnson, Cradock, Murphy, Reynolds and his sister, and the whole Horneck connection, including, of course, the Jessamy Bride, whose presence may have contributed to flutter the anxious heart of the author. The rehearsals went off with great applause; but that Colman attrib-

uted to the partiality of friends. He continued to croak, and refused to risk any expense in new scenery or dresses on a play which he was sure would prove a failure.

The time was at hand for the first representation, and as yet the comedy was without a title. "We are all in labor for a name for Goldy's play," said Johnson, who, as usual, took a kind of fatherly protecting interest in poor Goldsmith's affairs. *The Old House a New Inn* was thought of for a time, but still did not please. Sir Joshua Reynolds proposed *The Belle's Stratagem*, an elegant title, but not considered applicable, the perplexities of the comedy being produced by the mistakes of the hero, not the stratagem of the heroine. The name was afterwards adopted by Mrs. Cowley for one of her comedies. *The Mistakes of a Night* was the title at length fixed upon, to which Goldsmith prefixed the words, *She Stoops to Conquer*.

The evil bodings of Colman still continued: they were even communicated in the box-office to the servant of the Duke of Gloucester, who was sent to engage a box. Never did the play of a popular writer struggle into existence through more difficulties.

In the meantime Foote's "Primitive Puppet-Show," entitled *The Handsome Housemaid, or*

Piety in Pattens, had been brought out at the Haymarket on the 15th of February. All the world, fashionable and unfashionable, had crowded to the theatre. The street was thronged with equipages,—the doors were stormed by the mob. The burlesque was completely successful, and sentimental comedy received its quietus. Even Garrick, who had recently befriended it, now gave it a kick, as he saw it going down-hill, and sent Goldsmith a humorous prologue to help his comedy of the opposite school. Garrick and Goldsmith, however, were now on very cordial terms, to which the social meetings in the circle of the Hornecks and Bunburys may have contributed.

On the 15th of March the new comedy was to be performed. Those who had stood up for its merits, and been irritated and disgusted by the treatment it had received from the manager, determined to muster their forces, and aid in giving it a good launch upon the town. The particulars of this confederation, and of its triumphant success, are amusingly told by Cumberland in his memoirs.

"We were not over-sanguine of success, but perfectly determined to struggle hard for our author. We accordingly assembled our strength at the Shakspeare Tavern, in a considerable body, for an early dinner, where Samuel John-

son took the chair at the head of a long table, and was the life and soul of the corps; the poet took post silently by his side, with the Burkes, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fitzherbert, Caleb Whitefoord, and a phalanx of North British, predetermined applauders, under the banner of Major Mills,—all good men and true. Our illustrious president was in inimitable glee; and poor Goldsmith that day took all his raillery as patiently and complacently as my friend Boswell would have done any day or every day of his life. In the meantime we did not forget our duty; and though we had a better comedy going, in which Johnson was chief actor, we betook ourselves in good time to our separate and allotted posts, and waited the awful drawing up of the curtain. As our stations were preconcerted, so were our signals for plaudits arranged and determined upon in a manner that gave every one his cue where to look for them, and how to follow them up.

"We had among us a very worthy and efficient member, long since lost to his friends and the world at large, Adam Drummond, of amiable memory, who was gifted by nature with the most sonorous, and at the same time the most contagious laugh that ever echoed from the human lungs. The neighing of the horse of the son of Hystaspes was a whisper to it; the

whole thunder of the theatre could not drown it. This kind and ingenious friend fairly forewarned us that he knew no more when to give his fire than the cannon did that was planted on a battery. He desired, therefore, to have a flapper at his elbow, and I had the honor to be deputed to that office. I planted him in an upper box, pretty nearly over the stage, in full view of the pit and galleries, and perfectly well situated to give the echo all its play through the hollows and recesses of the theatre. The success of our manœuvre was complete. All eyes were upon Johnson, who sat in a front row of a side-box; and when he laughed, everybody thought themselves warranted to roar. In the meantime, my friend followed signals with a rattle so irresistibly comic, that, when he had repeated it several times, the attention of the spectators was so engrossed by his person and performances, that the progress of the play seemed likely to become a secondary object, and I found it prudent to insinuate to him that he might halt his music without any prejudice to the author; but alas! it was now too late to rein him in; he had laughed upon my signal where he found no joke, and now, unluckily, he fancied that he found a joke in almost everything that was said; so that nothing in nature could be more mal-apropos than

some of his bursts every now and then were. These were dangerous moments, for the pit began to take umbrage ; but we carried our point through, and triumphed not only over Colman's judgment, but our own."

Much of this statement has been condemned as exaggerated or discolored. Cumberland's memoirs have generally been characterized as partaking of romance, and in the present instance he had particular motives for tampering with the truth. He was a dramatic writer himself, jealous of the success of a rival, and anxious to have it attributed to the private management of friends. According to various accounts, public and private, such management was unnecessary, for the piece was " received throughout with the greatest acclamations."

Goldsmith, in the present instance, had not dared, as on a former occasion, to be present at the first performance. He had been so overcome by his apprehensions that, at the preparatory dinner, he could hardly utter a word, and was so choked that he could not swallow a mouthful. When his friends trooped to the theatre, he stole away to St. James's Park : there he was found by a friend, between seven and eight o'clock, wandering up and down the Mall like a troubled spirit. With difficulty he was persuaded to go to the theatre,

where his presence might be important should any alteration be necessary. He arrived at the opening of the fifth act, and made his way behind the scenes. Just as he entered there was a slight hiss at the improbability of *Tony Lumpkin's* trick on his mother, in persuading her she was forty miles off, on Crackskull Common, though she had been trundled about on her own grounds. "What 's that? what 's that!" cried Goldsmith to the manager, in great agitation. "Pshaw! Doctor," replied Colman, sarcastically, "don't be frightened at a squib, when we 've been sitting these two hours on a barrel of gunpowder!" Though of a most forgiving nature, Goldsmith did not easily forget this ungracious and ill-timed sally.

If Colman was indeed actuated by the paltry motives ascribed to him in his treatment of this play, he was most amply punished by its success, and by the taunts, epigrams, and censures levelled at him through the press, in which his false prophecies were jeered at, his critical judgment called in question, and he was openly taxed with literary jealousy. So galling and unremitting was the fire, that he at length wrote to Goldsmith, entreating him "to take him off the rack of the newspapers"; in the meantime, to escape the laugh that was

raised about him in the theatrical world of London, he took refuge in Bath during the triumphant career of the comedy.

The following is one of the many squibs which assailed the ears of the manager:

TO GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.,

ON THE SUCCESS OF DR. GOLDSMITH'S NEW COMEDY.

"Come, Coley, doff those mourning weeds,
Nor thus with jokes be flamm'd;
Tho' Goldsmith's present play succeeds,
His next may still be damn'd.

"As this has 'scaped without a fall,
To sink his next prepare;
New actors hire from Wapping Wall,
And dresses from Rag Fair.

"For scenes let tatter'd blankets fly,
The prologue Kelly write;
Then swear again the piece must die
Before the author's night.

"Should these tricks fail, the lucky elf
To bring to lasting shame,
E'en write *the best you can yourself*,
And print it in *his name*."

The solitary hiss which had startled Goldsmith, was ascribed by some of the newspaper scribblers to Cumberland himself, who was

"manifestly miserable" at the delight of the audience, or to Ossian Macpherson, who was hostile to the whole Johnson clique, or to Goldsmith's dramatic rival, Kelly. The following is one of the epigrams which appeared:

"At Dr. Goldsmith's merry play,
All the spectators laugh, they say;
The assertion, sir, I must deny,
For Cumberland and Kelly cry.
"*Ride si sapis.*"

Another, addressed to Goldsmith, alludes to Kelly's early apprenticeship to stay-making:

"If Kelly finds fault with the *shape* of your muse,
And thinks that too loosely it plays,
He surely, dear Doctor, will never refuse
To make it a new *Pair of Stays!*"

Cradock had returned to the country before the production of the play; the following letter, written just after the performance, gives an additional picture of the thorns which beset an author in the path of theatrical literature:

"My dear Sir,—

"The play has met with a success much beyond your expectations or mine. I thank you sincerely for your epilogue, which, however, could not be used, but with your permission shall be printed. The story in short is this.

Murphy sent me rather the outline of an epilogue than an epilogue, which was to be sung by Miss Catley, and which she approved; Mrs. Bulkley, hearing this, insisted on throwing up her part (*Miss Hardcastle*) unless, according to the custom of the theatre, she were permitted to speak the epilogue. In this embarrassment I thought of making a quarrelling epilogue between Catley and her, debating *who* should speak the epilogue; but then Miss Catley refused after I had taken the trouble of drawing it out. I was then at a loss indeed; an epilogue was to be made, and for none but Mrs. Bulkley. I made one, and Colman thought it too bad to be spoken; I was obliged, therefore, to try a fourth time, and I made a very mawkish thing, as you 'll shortly see. Such is the history of my stage adventures, and which I have at last done with. I cannot help saying that I am very sick of the stage; and though I believe I shall get three tolerable benefits, yet I shall, on the whole, be a loser, even in a pecuniary light; my ease and comfort I certainly lost while it was in agitation.

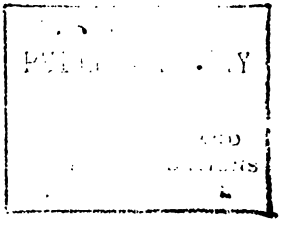
"I am, my dear Cradock, your obliged and obedient servant,

"OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

"P. S.—Present my most humble respects to Mrs. Cradock."

Mrs. Bulkley as Mrs. Wilding.

From a drawing by J. Roberts.



Johnson, who had taken such a conspicuous part in promoting the interest of poor "Goldy," was triumphant at the success of the piece. "I know of no comedy for many years," said he, "that has so much exhilarated an audience; that has answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry."

Goldsmith was happy, also, in gleaning applause from less authoritative sources. Northcote, the painter, then a youthful pupil of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Ralph, Sir Joshua's confidential man, had taken their stations in the gallery to lead the applause in that quarter. Goldsmith asked Northcote's opinion of the play. The youth modestly declared he could not presume to judge on such matters. "Did it make you laugh?" "Oh, exceedingly!" "That is all I require," replied Goldsmith; and rewarded him for his criticism by box-tickets for his first benefit-night.

The comedy was immediately put to press, and dedicated to Johnson in the following grateful and affectionate terms:

"In inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honor to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the inter-

saw a person that either liked it or approved it, any more than the absurd plot of Home's tragedy of *Alonzo*. Mr. Goldsmith, correct your arrogance, reduce your vanity, and endeavor to believe, as a man, you are of the plainest sort,—and as an author, but a mortal piece of mediocrity.

" Brise le miroir infidèle
Qui vus cache la vérité.

" TOM TICKLE."

It would be difficult to devise a letter more calculated to wound the peculiar sensibilities of Goldsmith. The attacks upon him as an author, though annoying enough, he could have tolerated; but then the allusion to his " grotesque " person; to his studious attempts to adorn it; and, above all, to his being an unsuccessful admirer of the lovely H—k (the Jessamy Bride), struck rudely upon the most sensitive part of his highly sensitive nature. The paragraph, it is said, was first pointed out to him by an officious friend, an Irishman, who told him he was bound in honor to resent it; but he needed no such prompting. He was in a high state of excitement and indignation, and, accompanied by his friend, who is said to have been a Captain Higgins, of the marines,

he repaired to Paternoster Row, to the shop of Evans, the publisher, whom he supposed to be the editor of the paper. Evans was summoned by his shopman from an adjoining room. Goldsmith announced his name. "I have called," added he, "in consequence of a scurrilous attack made upon me, and an unwarrantable liberty taken with the name of a young lady. As for myself, I care little; but her name must not be sported with."

Evans professed utter ignorance of the matter, and said he would speak to the editor. He stooped to examine a file of the paper, in search of the offensive article; whereupon Goldsmith's friend gave him a signal, that now was a favorable moment for the exercise of his cane. The hint was taken as quick as given, and the cane was vigorously applied to the back of the stooping publisher. The latter rallied in an instant, and, being a stout, high-blooded Welshman, returned the blows with interest. A lamp hanging overhead was broken, and sent down a shower of oil upon the combatants; but the battle raged with unceasing fury. The shopman ran off for a constable; but Dr. Kenrick, who happened to be in the adjacent room, sallied forth, interfered between the combatants, and put an end to the affray. He conducted Goldsmith to a coach, in exceedingly battered and

tattered plight, and accompanied him home, soothing him with much mock commiseration, though he was generally suspected, and on good grounds, to be the author of the libel.

Evans immediately instituted a suit against Goldsmith for an assault, but was ultimately prevailed upon to compromise the matter, the poet contributing fifty pounds to the Welsh charity.

Newspapers made themselves, as may well be supposed, exceedingly merry with the combat. Some censured him severely for invading the sanctity of a man's own house; others accused him of having, in his former capacity of editor of a magazine, been guilty of the very offences that he now resented in others. This drew from him the following vindication :—

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"Lest it should be supposed that I have been willing to correct in others an abuse of which I have been guilty myself, I beg leave to declare, that, in all my life, I never wrote or dictated a single paragraph, letter, or essay in a newspaper, except a few moral essays under the character of a Chinese, about ten years ago, in the *Ledger*, and a letter, to which I signed my name, in the *St. James's Chronicle*. If the

liberty of the press, therefore, has been abused, I have had no hand in it.

"I have always considered the press as the protector of our freedom, as a watchful guardian, capable of uniting the weak against the encroachments of power. What concerns the public most properly admits of a public discussion. But, of late, the press has turned from defending public interest to making inroads upon private life; from combating the strong to overwhelming the feeble. No condition is now too obscure for its abuse, and the protector has become the tyrant of the people. In this manner, the freedom of the press is beginning to sow the seeds of its own dissolution; the great must oppose it from principle, and the weak from fear; till at last every rank of mankind shall be found to give up its benefits, content with security from insults.

"How to put a stop to this licentiousness, by which all are indiscriminately abused, and by which vice consequently escapes in the general censure, I am unable to tell; all I could wish is, that, as the law gives us no protection against the injury, so it should give calumniators no shelter after having provoked correction. The insults which we receive before the public, by being more open, are the more distressing; by treating them with silent contempt

we do not pay a sufficient deference to the opinion of the world. By recurring to legal redress we too often expose the weakness of the law, which only serves to increase our mortification by failing to relieve us. In short, every man should singly consider himself as the guardian of the liberty of the press, and, as far as his influence can extend, should endeavor to prevent its licentiousness becoming at last the grave of its freedom.

"OLIVER GOLDSMITH."

Boswell, who had just arrived in town, met with this article in a newspaper which he found at Dr. Johnson's. The Doctor was from home at the time, and Bozzy and Mrs. Williams, in a critical conference over the letter, determined from the style that it must have been written by the lexicographer himself. The latter on his return soon undeceived them. "Sir," said he to Boswell, "Goldsmith would no more have asked me to have wrote such a thing as that for him than he would have asked me to feed him with a spoon, or do anything else that denoted his imbecility. Sir, had he shown it to any one friend, he would not have been allowed to publish it. He has, indeed, done it very well; but it is a foolish thing well done. I suppose he has been

so much elated with the success of his new comedy, that he has thought everything that concerned him must be of importance to the public."

Chapter IX.

Boswell in Holy-Week—Dinner at Oglethorpe's—Dinner at Paoli's—The Policy of Truth—Goldsmith Affects Independence of Royalty—Paoli's Compliment—Johnson's Eulogium on the Fiddle—Question about Suicide—Boswell's Subserviency.

THE return of Boswell to town to his task of noting down the conversations of Johnson, enables us to glean from his journal some scanty notices of Goldsmith. It was now Holy-Week, a time during which Johnson was particularly solemn in his manner and strict in his devotions. Boswell, who was the imitator of the great moralist in everything, assumed, of course, an extra devoutness on the present occasion. "He had an odd mock-solemnity of tone and manner," said Miss Burney (afterwards Madame D'Arblay), "which he had acquired from constantly thinking, and imitating Dr. Johnson." It would seem that he undertook to deal out some

second-hand homilies, *à la Johnson*, for the edification of Goldsmith during Holy-Week. The poet, whatever might be his religious feeling, had no disposition to be schooled by so shallow an apostle. "Sir," said he in reply, "as I take my shoes from the shoemaker, and my coat from the tailor, so I take my religion from the priest."

Boswell treasured up the reply in his memory or his memorandum-book. A few days afterwards, the 9th of April, he kept Good Friday with Dr. Johnson, in orthodox style; breakfasted with him on tea and cross-buns; went to church with him morning and evening; fasted in the interval, and read with him the Greek Testament: then, in the piety of his heart, complained of the sore rebuff he had met with in the course of his religious exhortations to the poet, and lamented that the latter should indulge in "this loose way of talking. "Sir," replied Johnson, "Goldsmith knows nothing—he has made up his mind about nothing."

This reply seems to have gratified the lurking jealousy of Boswell, and he has recorded it in his journal. Johnson, however, with respect to Goldsmith, and indeed with respect to everybody else, blew hot as well as cold, according to the humor he was in. Boswell, who

was astonished and piqued at the continually increasing celebrity of the poet, observed some time after to Johnson, in a tone of surprise, that Goldsmith had acquired more fame than all the officers of the last war who were not generals. "Why, sir," answered Johnson, his old feeling of good-will working uppermost, "you will find ten thousand fit to do what they did, before you find one to do what Goldsmith has done. You must consider that a thing is valued according to its rarity. A pebble that paves the street is in itself more useful than the diamond upon a lady's finger."

On the 13th of April we find Goldsmith and Johnson at the table of old General Oglethorpe, discussing the question of the degeneracy of the human race. Goldsmith asserts the fact, and attributes it to the influence of luxury. Johnson denies the fact, and observes that, even admitting it, luxury could not be the cause. It reached but a small proportion of the human race. Soldiers, on sixpence a day, could not indulge in luxuries; the poor and laboring classes, forming the great mass of mankind, were out of its sphere. Wherever it could reach them, it strengthened them and rendered them prolific. The conversation was not of particular force or point as reported by Boswell; the dinner-party was a very small

one, in which there was no provocation to intellectual display.

After dinner they took tea with the ladies, where we find poor Goldsmith happy and at home, singing *Tony Lumpkin's* song of the "Three Jolly Pigeons," and another, called the "Humors of Ballamaguery," to a very pretty Irish tune. It was to have been introduced in *She Stoops to Conquer* but was left out, as the actress who played the heroine could not sing.

It was in these genial moments that the sunshine of Goldsmith's nature would break out, and he would say and do a thousand whimsical and agreeable things that made him the life of the strictly social circle. Johnson, with whom conversation was everything, used to judge Goldsmith too much by his own colloquial standard, and undervalue him for being less provided than himself with acquired facts, the ammunition of the tongue and often the mere lumber of the memory; others, however, valued him for the native felicity of his thoughts, however carelessly expressed, and for certain good-fellow qualities, less calculated to dazzle than to endear. "It is amazing," said Johnson one day, after he himself had been talking like an oracle; "it is amazing how little Goldsmith knows; he seldom comes

where he is not more ignorant than any one else." "Yet," replied Sir Joshua Reynolds, with affectionate promptness, "there is no man whose company is more *liked*."

Two or three days after the dinner at General Oglethorpe's, Goldsmith met Johnson again at the table of General Paoli, the hero of Corsica. Martinelli, of Florence, author of an Italian History of England, was among the guests; as well as Boswell, to whom we are indebted for minutes of the conversation which took place. The question was debated whether Martinelli should continue his history down to that day. "To be sure he should," said Goldsmith. "No, sir," cried Johnson, "it would give great offence. He would have to tell of almost all the living great what they did not wish told." Goldsmith.—"It may, perhaps, be necessary for a native to be more cautious; but a foreigner, who comes among us without prejudice, may be considered as holding the place of a judge, and may speak his mind freely." Johnson.—"Sir, a foreigner, when he sends a work from the press, ought to be on his guard against catching the error and mistaken enthusiasm of the people among whom he happens to be." Goldsmith.—"Sir, he wants only to sell his history, and to tell truth; one an honest, the other a laudable

motive." Johnson.—"Sir, they are both laudable motives. It is laudable in a man to wish to live by his labors; but he should write so as he may *live* by them, not so as he may be knocked on the head. I would advise him to be at Calais before he publishes his history of the present age. A foreigner who attaches himself to a political party in this country is in the worst state that can be imagined; he is looked upon as a mere intermeddler. A native may do it from interest." Boswell.—"Or principle." Goldsmith.—"There are people who tell a hundred political lies every day, and are not hurt by it. Surely, then, one may tell truth with perfect safety." Johnson.—"Why, sir, in the first place, he who tells a hundred lies has disarmed the force of his lies. But, besides, a man had rather have a hundred lies told of him than one truth which he does not wish to be told." Goldsmith.—"For my part, I'd tell the truth, and shame the devil." Johnson.—"Yes, sir, but the devil will be angry. I wish to shame the devil as much as you do, but I should choose to be out of the reach of his claws." Goldsmith.—"His claws can do you no hurt where you have the shield of truth."

This last reply was one of Goldsmith's lucky hits, and closed the argument in his favor.

"We talked," writes Boswell, "of the

King's coming to see Goldsmith's new play." "I wish he would," said Goldsmith, adding, however, with an affected indifference, "not that it would do me the least good." "Well, then," cried Johnson, laughing, "let us say it would do *him* good. No, sir, this affectation will not pass,—it is mighty idle. In such a state as ours, who would not wish to please the chief magistrate?"

"I *do* wish to please him," rejoined Goldsmith. "I remember a line in Dryden:

> "'And every poet is the monarch's friend';

it ought to be reversed."

"Nay," said Johnson, "there are finer lines in Dryden on this subject:

> "'For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
> And never rebel was to arts a friend.'"

General Paoli observed that "successful rebels might be." "Happy rebellions," interjected Martinelli. "We have no such phrase," cried Goldsmith. "But have you not the thing?" asked Paoli. "Yes," replied Goldsmith, "all our *happy* revolutions. They have hurt our constitution, and *will* hurt it, till we mend it by another HAPPY REVOLUTION." This was a sturdy sally of Jacobitism, that quite surprised Boswell, but must have been relished by Johnson.

General Paoli mentioned a passage in the play, which had been construed into a compliment to a lady of distinction, whose marriage with the Duke of Cumberland had excited the strong disapprobation of the King as a mésalliance. Boswell, to draw Goldsmith out, pretended to think the compliment unintentional. The poet smiled and hesitated. The General came to his relief. "Monsieur Goldsmith," said he, "est comme la mer, qui jette des perles et beaucoup d'autres belles choses, sans s'en appercevoir." (Mr. Goldsmith is like the sea, which casts forth pearls and many other beautiful things without perceiving it.)

"Tres-bien dit, et tres-élégamment" (very well said, and very elegantly), exclaimed Goldsmith, delighted with so beautiful a compliment from such a quarter.

Johnson spoke disparagingly of the learning of Mr. Harris, of Salisbury, and doubted his being a good Grecian. "He is what is much better," cried Goldsmith, with prompt good-nature,—"he is a worthy, humane man." "Nay, sir," rejoined the logical Johnson, "that is not to the purpose of our argument; that will prove that he can play upon the fiddle as well as Giardini, as that he is an eminent Grecian." Goldsmith found he had got

into a scrape, and seized upon Giardini to help him out of it. "The greatest musical performers," said he, dexterously turning the conversation, "have but small emoluments; Giardini, I am told, does not get above seven hundred a year." "That is indeed but little for a man to get," observed Johnson, "who does best that which so many endeavor to do. There is nothing, I think, in which the power of art is shown so much as in playing on the fiddle. In all other things we can do something at first. Any man will forge a bar of iron, if you give him a hammer; not so well as a smith, but tolerably. A man will saw a piece of wood, and make a box, though a clumsy one; but give him a fiddle and a fiddlestick and he can do nothing."

This, upon the whole, though reported by the one-sided Boswell, is a tolerable specimen of the conversations of Goldsmith and Johnson; the former heedless, often illogical, always on the kind-hearted side of the question, and prone to redeem himself by lucky hits; the latter closely argumentative, studiously sententious, often profound, and sometimes laboriously prosaic.

They had an argument a few days later at Mr. Thrale's table, on the subject of suicide. "Do you think, sir," said Boswell, "that all

who commit suicide are mad?" "Sir," replied Johnson, "they are not often universally disordered in their intellects, but one passion presses so upon them that they yield to it, and commit suicide, as a passionate man will stab another. I have often thought," added he, "that after a man has taken the resolution to kill himself, it is not courage in him to do anything, however desperate, because he has nothing to fear." "I don't see that," observed Goldsmith. "Nay, but, my dear sir," rejoined Johnson, "why should you not see what every one else does?" "It is," replied Goldsmith, "for fear of something that he has resolved to kill himself; and will not that timid disposition restrain him?" "It does not signify," pursued Johnson, "that the fear of something made him resolve; it is upon the state of his mind after the resolution is taken, that I argue. Suppose a man, either from fear, or pride, or conscience, or whatever motive, has resolved to kill himself; when once the resolution is taken he has nothing to fear. He may then go and take the King of Prussia by the nose at the head of his army. He cannot fear the rack who is determined to kill himself." Boswell reports no more of the discussion, though Goldsmith might have continued it with advantage: for the very timid disposi-

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tion, which through fear of something was impelling the man to commit suicide, might restrain him from an act involving the punishment of the rack, more terrible to him than death itself.

It is to be regretted in all these reports by Boswell, we have scarcely anything but the remarks of Johnson; it is only by accident that he now and then gives us the observations of others, when they are necessary to explain or set off those of his hero. "When in *that presence*," says Miss Burney, "he was unobservant, if not contemptuous of every one else. In truth, when he met with Dr. Johnson, he commonly forbore even answering anything that was said, or attending to anything that went forward, lest he should miss the smallest sound from that voice, to which he paid such exclusive, though merited homage. But the moment that voice burst forth, the attention which it excited on Mr. Boswell amounted almost to pain. His eyes goggled with eagerness; he leant his ear almost on the shoulder of the Doctor; and his mouth dropped open to catch every syllable that might be uttered; nay, he seemed not only to dread losing a word, but to be anxious not to miss a breathing, as if hoping from it latently, or mystically, some information."

On one occasion the Doctor detected Boswell, or Bozzy, as he called him, eavesdropping behind his chair, as he was conversing with Miss Burney at Mr. Thrale's table. "What are you doing there, sir?" cried he, turning round angrily, and clapping his hand upon his knee. "Go to the table, sir."

Boswell obeyed with an air of affright and submission, which raised a smile on every face. Scarce had he taken his seat, however, at a distance, than, impatient to get again at the side of Johnson, he rose and was running off in quest of something to show him, when the Doctor roared after him authoritatively, "What are you thinking of, sir? Why do you get up before the cloth is removed? Come back to your place, sir";—and the obsequious spaniel did as he was commanded.—"Running about in the middle of meals!" muttered the Doctor, pursing his mouth at the same time to restrain his rising risibility.

Boswell got another rebuff from Johnson, which would have demolished any other man. He had been teasing him with many direct questions, such as, "What did you do, sir?—What did you say, sir?" until the great philologist became perfectly enraged. "I will not be put to the *question!*" roared he. "Don't you consider, sir, that these are not the manners

of a gentleman? I will not be baited with *what* and *why*;—What is this? What is that? Why is a cow's tail long? Why is a fox's tail bushy?" "Why, sir," replied pilgarlick, "you are so good that I venture to trouble you." "Sir," replied Johnson, "my being so *good* is no reason why you should be so *ill*." "You have but two topics, sir," exclaimed he on another occasion, "yourself and me, and I am sick of both."

Boswell's inveterate disposition to *toad*, was a sore cause of mortification to his father, the old laird of Auchinleck (or Affleck). He had been annoyed by his extravagant devotion to Paoli, but then he was something of a military hero; but this tagging at the heels of Dr. Johnson, whom he considered a kind of pedagogue, set his Scotch blood in a ferment. "There 's nae hope for Jamie, mon," said he to a friend;—"Jamie is gaen clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He 's done wi' Paoli; he 's off wi' the landlouping scoundrel of a Corsican; and whose tail do you think he has pinn'd himself to now, mon? A *dominie*, mon; an auld dominie; he keeped a schule, and cau'd it an acaadamy."

We shall show in the next chapter that Jamie's devotion to the dominie did not go unrewarded.

Chapter X.

Changes in the Literary Club—Johnson's Objection to Garrick—Election of Boswell.

THE Literary Club (as we have termed the club in Gerard Street, though it took that name some time later) had now been in existence several years. Johnson was exceedingly chary at first of its exclusiveness, and opposed to its being augmented in number. Not long after its institution, Sir Joshua Reynolds was speaking of it to Garrick. "I like it much," said little David, briskly; "I think I shall be of you." "When Sir Joshua mentioned this to Dr. Johnson," says Boswell, "he was much displeased with the actor's conceit. '*He 'll be of us?*' growled he. 'How does he know we will *permit* him? The first duke in England has no right to hold such language.'"

When Sir John Hawkins spoke favorably of Garrick's pretensions, "Sir," replied Johnson,

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"he will disturb us by his buffoonery." In the same spirit he declared to Mr. Thrale, that, if Garrick should apply for admission, he would black-ball him. "Who, sir?" exclaimed Thrale, with surprise; "Mr. Garrick—your friend, your companion—black-ball him!" "Why, sir," replied Johnson, "I love my little David dearly—better than all or any of his flatterers do; but surely one ought to sit in a society like ours,

"'Unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or player.'"

The exclusion from the club was a sore mortification to Garrick, though he bore it without complaining. He could not help continually to ask questions about it—what was going on there—whether he was ever the subject of conversation. By degrees the rigor of the club relaxed: some of the members grew negligent. Beauclerc lost his right of membership by neglecting to attend. On his marriage, however, with Lady Diana Spencer, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, and recently divorced from Viscount Bolingbroke, he had claimed and regained his seat in the club. The number of members had likewise been augmented. The proposition to increase it originated with Goldsmith. "It would give," he thought, "an agreeable variety to their meet-

Portrait of James Boswell of Auchinleck.

From an old steel print.

imagine the discussions that took place. Boswell had made himself absurd in such a variety of ways that the very idea of his admission was exceedingly irksome to some of the members. "The honor of being elected into the Turk's Head Club," said the Bishop of St. Asaph, "is not inferior to that of being representative of Westminster and Surrey"; what had Boswell done to merit such an honor? What chance had he of gaining it? The answer was simple: he had been the persevering worshipper, if not sycophant of Johnson. The great lexicographer had a heart to be won by apparent affection; he stood forth authoritatively in support of his vassal. If asked to state the merits of the candidate he summed them up in an indefinite but comprehensive word of his own coining:—he was *clubbable*. He moreover gave significant hints that if Boswell were kept out he should oppose the admission of any other candidate. No further opposition was made; in fact none of the members had been so fastidious and exclusive in regard to the club as Johnson himself; and if he were pleased, they were easily satisfied; besides, they knew that, with all his faults, Boswell was a cheerful companion, and possessed lively, social qualities.

On Friday, when the ballot was to take place, Beauclerc gave a dinner, at his house in the

Adelphi, where Boswell met several of the members who were favorable to his election. After dinner the latter adjourned to the club, leaving Boswell in company with Lady Di Beauclerc until the fate of his election should be known. He sat, he says, in a state of anxiety which even the charming conversation of Lady Di could not entirely dissipate. It was not long before tidings were brought of his election, and he was conducted to the place of meeting, where, beside the company he had met at dinner, Burke, Dr. Nugent, Garrick, Goldsmith, and Mr. William Jones were waiting to receive him. The club, notwithstanding all its learned dignity in the eyes of the world, could at times "unbend and play the fool" as well as less important bodies. Some of its jocose conversations have at times leaked out, and a society in which Goldsmith could venture to sing his song of "an old woman tossed in a blanket," could not be so very staid in its gravity. We may suppose, therefore, the jokes that had been passing among the members while awaiting the arrival of Boswell. Beauclerc himself could not have repressed his disposition for a sarcastic pleasantry. At least we have a right to presume all this from the conduct of Dr. Johnson himself.

With all his gravity he possessed a deep

fund of quiet humor, and felt a kind of whimsical responsibility to protect the club from the absurd propensities of the very questionable associate he had thus inflicted on them. Rising, therefore, as Boswell entered, he advanced with a very doctorial air, placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and then delivered, *ex cathedra*, a mock solemn charge, pointing out the conduct expected from him as a good member of the club; what he was to do, and especially what he was to avoid; including in the latter, no doubt, all those petty, prying, questioning, gossiping, babbling habits which had so often grieved the spirit of the lexicographer. It is to be regretted that Boswell has never thought proper to note down the particulars of this charge, which, from the well-known characters and positions of the parties, might have furnished a parallel to the noted charge of Launcelot Gobbo to his dog.

Chapter XI.

Dinner at the Dillys'—Conversations on Natural History—Intermeddling of Boswell—Dispute about Toleration—Johnson's Rebuff to Goldsmith; his Apology—Man-Worship—Doctors Major and Minor—A Farewell Visit.

A FEW days after the serio-comic scene of the elevation of Boswell into the Literary Club, we find that indefatigable biographer giving particulars of a dinner at the Dillys', booksellers, in the Poultry, at which he met Goldsmith and Johnson, with several other literary characters. His anecdotes of the conversation, of course, go to glorify Dr. Johnson; for, as he observes in his biography, "his conversation alone, or what led to it, or was interwoven with it, is the business of this work." Still on the present, as on other occasions, he gives unintentional and perhaps unavoidable gleams of Goldsmith's good sense, which show that the latter

only wanted a less prejudiced and more impartial reporter, to put down the charge of colloquial incapacity so unjustly fixed upon him. The conversation turned upon the natural history of birds, a beautiful subject, on which the poet, from his recent studies, his habits of observation, and his natural tastes, must have talked with instruction and feeling; yet, though we have much of what Johnson said, we have only a casual remark or two of Goldsmith. One was on the migration of swallows, which he pronounced partial; "the stronger ones," said he, "migrate, the others do not."

Johnson denied to the brute creation the faculty of reason. "Birds," said he, "build by instinct; they never improve; they build their first nest as well as any one they ever build." "Yet we see," observed Goldsmith, "if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will make a slighter nest and lay again." "Sir," replied Johnson, "that is because at first she has full time, and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention, she is pressed to lay, and must, therefore, make her nest quickly, and consequently it will be slight." "The nidification of birds," rejoined Goldsmith, "is what is least known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it."

While conversation was going on in this placid, agreeable, and instructive manner, the eternal meddler and busybody, Boswell, must intrude to put in a brawl. The Dillys were dissenters; two of their guests were dissenting clergymen; another, Mr. Toplady, was a clergyman of the established church. Johnson himself was a zealous, uncompromising churchman. None but a marplot like Boswell would have thought, on such an occasion and in such company, to broach the subject of religious toleration; but, as has been well observed, "it was his perverse inclination to introduce subjects that he hoped would produce difference and debate." In the present instance he gained his point. An animated dispute immediately arose, in which, according to Boswell's report, Johnson monopolized the greater part of the conversation; not always treating the dissenting clergymen with the greatest courtesy, and even once wounding the feelings of the mild and amiable Bennet Langton by his harshness.

Goldsmith mingled a little in the dispute and with some advantage, but was cut short by flat contradictions when most in the right. He sat for a time silent but impatient under such overbearing dogmatism, though Boswell, with his usual misinterpretation, attributes his

"restless agitation" to a wish *to get in and shine.* "Finding himself excluded," continues Boswell, "he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for a time with it in his hand, like a gamester who at the end of a long night lingers for a little while to see if he can have a favorable opportunity to finish with success." Once he was beginning to speak, when he was overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive his attempt; whereupon he threw down, as it were, his hat and his argument, and, darting an angry glance at Johnson, exclaimed in a bitter tone, "*Take it.*"

Just then one of the disputants was beginning to speak, when Johnson uttering some sound, as if about to interrupt him, Goldsmith, according to Boswell, seized the opportunity to vent his own *envy and spleen* under pretext of supporting another person. "Sir," said he to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour; pray allow us now to hear him." It was a reproof in the lexicographer's own style, and he may have felt that he merited it; but he was not accustomed to be reproved. "Sir," said he, sternly, "I was not interrupting the gentleman; I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, *you are impertinent.*" Goldsmith made no reply,

but after some time went away, having another engagement.

That evening, as Boswell was on the way with Johnson and Langton to the club, he seized the occasion to make some disparaging remarks on Goldsmith, which he thought would just then be acceptable to the great lexicographer. "It was a pity," he said, "that Goldsmith would on every occasion endeavor to shine, by which he so often exposed himself." Langton contrasted him with Addison, who, content with the fame of his writings, acknowledged himself unfit for conversation; and on being taxed by a lady with silence in company, replied, "Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds." To this Boswell rejoined that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but was always taking out his purse. "Yes, sir," chuckled Johnson, "and that so often an empty purse."

By the time Johnson arrived at the club, however, his angry feelings had subsided, and his native generosity and sense of justice had got the uppermost. He found Goldsmith in company with Burke, Garrick, and other members, but sitting silent and apart, "brooding," as Boswell says, "over the reprimand he had received." Johnson's good heart yearned tow-

ards him ; and knowing his placable nature, "I'll make Goldsmith forgive me," whispered he ; then, with a loud voice, "Dr. Goldsmith," said he, "something passed to-day where you and I dined,—*I ask your pardon.*" The ire of the poet was extinguished in an instant, and his grateful affection for the magnanimous though sometimes overbearing moralist rushed to his heart. "It must be much from you, sir," said he, "that I take ill!" "And so," adds Boswell, "the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual." We do not think these stories tell to the poet's disadvantage, even though related by Boswell.

Goldsmith, with all his modesty, could not be ignorant of his proper merit, and must have felt annoyed at times at being undervalued and elbowed aside by light-minded or dull men, in their blind and exclusive homage to the literary autocrat. It was a fine reproof he gave to Boswell on one occasion, for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honor of exclusive superiority. "Sir, you are for making a monarchy what should be a republic." On another occasion, when he was conversing in company with great vivacity, and apparently to the satisfaction of those around him, an honest Swiss who sat near, one George Michael Moser, keeper of

the Royal Academy, perceiving Dr. Johnson rolling himself as if about to speak, exclaimed, "Stay, stay! Toctor Shonson is going to say something." And are you sure, sir," replied Goldsmith, sharply, "that *you* can comprehend what he says?"

This clever rebuke, which gives the main zest to the anecdote, is omitted by Boswell, who probably did not perceive the point of it.

He relates another anecdote of the kind on the authority of Johnson himself. The latter and Goldsmith were one evening in company with the Rev. George Graham, a master of Eton, who, notwithstanding the sobriety of his cloth, had got intoxicated "to about the pitch of looking at one man and talking to another." "Doctor," cried he, in an ecstasy of devotion and good-will, but goggling by mistake upon Goldsmith, "I should be glad to see you at Eton." "I shall be glad to wait upon you," replied Goldsmith. "No, no!" cried the other, eagerly; "'t is not you I mean, Doctor *Minor*, 't is Doctor *Major* there." "You may easily conceive," said Johnson, in relating the anecdote, "what effect this had upon Goldsmith, who was irascible as a hornet." The only comment, however, which he is said to have made, partakes more of quaint and dry humor than bitterness. "That Graham,"

said he, "is enough to make one commit suicide." What more could be said to express the intolerable nuisance of a consummate *bore?*

We have now given the last scenes between Goldsmith and Johnson which stand recorded by Boswell. The latter called on the poet, a few days after the dinner at Dillys', to take leave of him prior to departing for Scotland*; yet, even in this last interview, he contrives to get up a charge of "jealousy and envy."

* One of Peter Pindar's (Dr. Wolcot) most amusing *jeux d'esprit* is his congratulatory epistle to Boswell on this tour, of which we subjoin a few lines.

"O Boswell, Bozzy, Bruce, whate'er thy name,
Thou mighty shark for anecdote and fame;
Thou jackal, leading lion Johnson forth,
To eat M'Pherson 'midst his native north;
To frighten grave professors with his roar,
And shake the Hebrides from shore to shore,
. . . . . .
Bless'd be thy labors, most adventurous Bozzy,
Bold rival of Sir John and Dame Piozzi;
Heavens! with what laurels shall thy head be crown'd!
A grove, a forest, shall thy ears surround!
Yes! whilst the Rambler shall a comet blaze,
And gild a world of darkness with his rays,
Thee, too, that world with wonderment shall hail,
A lively, bouncing cracker at his tail!"

Goldsmith, he would fain persuade us, is very angry that Johnson is going to travel with him in Scotland, and endeavors to persuade him that he will be a dead weight "to lug along through the Highlands and Hebrides." Any one else, knowing the character and habits of Johnson, would have thought the same; and no one but Boswell would have supposed his office of bear-leader to the *ursa major* a thing to be envied.

Chapter XII.

Project of a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences—Disappointment—Negligent Authorship—Application for a Pension—Beattie's *Essay on Truth*—Public Adulation—A High-Minded Rebuke.

THE works which Goldsmith had still in hand being already paid for, and the money gone, some new scheme must be devised to provide for the past and the future,—for impending debts which threatened to crush him, and expenses which were continually increasing. He now projected a work of greater compass than any he had yet undertaken : a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences on a comprehensive scale, which was to occupy a number of volumes. For this he received promise of assistance from several powerful hands. Johnson was to contribute an article on ethics ; Burke, an abstract of his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, an essay on the Berkleyan system of philosophy, and others on

political science; Sir Joshua Reynolds, an essay on painting; and Garrick, while he undertook on his own part to furnish an essay on acting, engaged Dr. Burney to contribute an article on music. Here was a great array of talent positively engaged, while other writers of eminence were to be sought for the various departments of science. Goldsmith was to edit the whole. An undertaking of this kind, while it did not incessantly task and exhaust his inventive powers by original composition, would give agreeable and profitable exercise to his taste and judgment in selecting, compiling, and arranging, and he calculated to diffuse over the whole the acknowledged graces of his style.

He drew up a prospectus of the plan, which is said by Bishop Percy, who saw it, to have been written with uncommon ability, and to have had that perspicuity and elegance for which his writings are remarkable. This paper, unfortunately, is no longer in existence.

Goldsmith's expectations, always sanguine respecting any new plan, were raised to an extraordinary height by the present project; and well they might be, when we consider the powerful coadjutors already pledged. They were doomed, however, to complete disappointment. Davies, the biblipole of Russell

Street, lets us into the secret of this failure. "The booksellers," said he, "notwithstanding they had a very good opinion of his abilities, yet were startled at the bulk, importance, and expense of so great an undertaking, the fate of which was to depend upon the industry of a man with whose indolence of temper and method of procrastination they had long been acquainted."

Goldsmith certainly gave reason for some such distrust by the heedlessness with which he conducted his literary undertakings. Those unfinished, but paid for, would be suspended to make way for some job that was to provide for present necessities. Those thus hastily taken up would be hastily executed, and the whole, however pressing, would be shoved aside and left "at loose ends," on some sudden call to social enjoyment or recreation.

Cradock tells us that on one occasion, when Goldsmith was hard at work on his *Natural History*, he sent to Dr. Percy and himself, entreating them to finish some pages of his work which lay upon his table, and for which the press was urgent, he being detained by other engagements at Windsor. They met by appointment at his chambers in the Temple, where they found everything in disorder, and costly books lying scattered about on the tables

and on the floor; many of the books on natural history which he had recently consulted lay open among uncorrected proof-sheets. The subject in hand, and from which he had suddenly broken off, related to birds. "Do you know anything about birds?" asked Dr. Percy, smiling. "Not an atom," replied Cradock; "do you?" "Not I! I scarcely know a goose from a swan; however, let us try what we can do." They set to work and completed their friendly task. Goldsmith, however, when he came to revise it, made such alterations that they could neither of them recognize their own share. The engagement at Windsor, which had thus caused Goldsmith to break off suddenly from his multifarious engagements, was a party of pleasure with some literary ladies. Another anecdote was current, illustrative of the carelessness with which he executed works requiring accuracy and research. On the 22d of June he had received payment in advance for a *Grecian History* in two volumes, though only one was finished. As he was pushing on doggedly at the second volume, Gibbon, the historian, called in. "You are the man of all others I wish to see," cried the poet, glad to be saved the trouble of reference to his books. "What was the name of that Indian king who gave Alexander the

Great so much trouble?" "Montezuma," replied Gibbon, sportively. The heedless author was about committing the name to paper without reflection, when Gibbon pretended to recollect himself, and gave the true name, Porus.

This story, very probably, was a sportive exaggeration; but it was a multiplicity of anecdotes like this and the preceding one, some true and some false, which had impaired the confidence of booksellers in Goldsmith as a man to be relied on for a task requiring wide and accurate research, and close and long-continued application. The project of the *Universal Dictionary*, therefore, met with no encouragement, and fell through.

The failure of this scheme, on which he had built such spacious hopes, sank deep into Goldsmith's heart. He was still further grieved and mortified by the failure of an effort made by some of his friends to obtain for him a pension from government. There had been a talk of the disposition of the ministry to extend the bounty of the crown to distinguished literary men in pecuniary difficulty, without regard to their political creed: when the merits and claims of Goldsmith, however, were laid before them, they met no favor. The sin of sturdy independence lay at his door. He had

refused to become a ministerial hack when offered a *carte blanche* by Parson Scott, the cabinet emissary. The wondering parson had left him in poverty and "*his garret*," and there the ministry were disposed to suffer him to remain.

In the meantime Dr. Beattie comes out with his *Essay on Truth*, and all the orthodox world are thrown into a paroxysm of contagious ecstasy. He is cried up as the great champion of Christianity against the attacks of modern philosophers and infidels; he is fêted and flattered in every way. He receives at Oxford the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law, at the same time with Sir Joshua Reynolds. The King sends for him, praises his Essay, and gives him a pension of two hundred pounds.

Goldsmith feels more acutely the denial of a pension to himself when one has thus been given unsolicited to a man he might without vanity consider so much his inferior. He was not one to conceal his feelings. "Here 's such a stir," said he one day at Thrale's table, "about a fellow that has written one book, and I have written so many!"

"Ah, Doctor!" exclaimed Johnson, in one of his caustic moods, "there go two-and-forty sixpences, you know, to one guinea." This is

one of the cuts at poor Goldsmith in which Johnson went contrary to head and heart in his love for saying what is called a "good thing." No one knew better than himself the comparative superiority of the writings of Goldsmith; but the jingle of the sixpences and the guinea was not to be resisted.

"Everybody," exclaimed Mrs. Thrale, "loves Dr. Beattie, but Goldsmith, who says he cannot bear the sight of so much applause as they all bestow upon him. Did he not tell us so himself, no one would believe he was so exceedingly ill-natured."

He told them so himself because he was too open and unreserved to disguise his feelings, and because he really considered the praise lavished on Beattie extravagant, as in fact it was. It was all, of course, set down to sheer envy and uncharitableness. To add to his annoyance, he found his friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, joining in the universal adulation. He had painted a full-length portrait of Beattie decked in the doctor's robes in which he had figured at Oxford, with the *Essay on Truth* under his arm and the angel of truth at his side, while Voltaire figured as one of the demons of infidelity, sophistry, and falsehood, driven into utter darkness.

Goldsmith had known Voltaire in early life;

he had been his admirer and his biographer; he grieved to find him receiving such an insult from the classic pencil of his friend. "It is unworthy of you," said he to Sir Joshua, "to debase so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie. Beattie and his book will be forgotten in ten years, while Voltaire's fame will last forever. Take care it does not perpetuate this picture to the shame of such a man as you." This noble and high-minded rebuke is the only instance on record of any reproachful words between the poet and the painter; and we are happy to find that it did not destroy the harmony of their intercourse.

Chapter XIII.

Toil without Hope—The Poet in the Green-Room; In the Flower-Garden; At Vauxhall—Dissipation without Gayety — Cradock in Town — Friendly Sympathy — A Parting Scene — An Invitation to Pleasure.

THWARTED in the plans and disappointed in the hopes which had recently cheered and animated him, Goldsmith found the labor at his half-finished tasks doubly irksome from the consciousness that the completion of them could not relieve him from his pecuniary embarrassments. His impaired health, also, rendered him less capable than formerly of sedentary application, and continual perplexities disturbed the flow of thought necessary for original composition. He lost his usual gayety and good-humor, and became, at times, peevish and irritable. Too proud of spirit to seek sympathy or relief from his friends, for the

pecuniary difficulties he had brought upon himself by his errors and extravagance, and unwilling, perhaps, to make known their amount, he buried his cares and anxieties in his own bosom, and endeavored in company to keep up his usual air of gayety and unconcern. This gave his conduct an appearance of fitfulness and caprice varying suddenly from moodiness to mirth, and from silent gravity to shallow laughter; causing surprise and ridicule in those who were not aware of the sickness of heart which lay beneath.

His poetical reputation, too, was sometimes a disadvantage to him; it drew upon him a notoriety which he was not always in the mood or the vein to act up to. "Good heavens, Mr. Foote," exclaimed an actress at the Haymarket Theatre, "what a humdrum kind of man Dr. Goldsmith appears in our green-room compared with the figure he makes in his poetry!" "The reason of that, madam," replied Foote, "is because the Muses are better company than the players."

Beauclerc's letters to his friend, Lord Charlemont, who was absent in Ireland, give us now and then an indication of the whereabout of the poet during the present year. "I have been but once to the club since you left England," writes he; "we were entertained, as usual,

with Goldsmith's absurdity." With Beauclerc everything was absurd that was not polished and pointed. In another letter he threatens, unless Lord Charlemont returns to England, to bring over the whole club, and let them loose upon him to drive him home by their peculiar habits of annoyance ;—Johnson shall spoil his books ; Goldsmith shall *pull his flowers ;* and last, and most intolerable of all, Boswell shall—talk to him. It would appear that the poet, who had a passion for flowers, was apt to pass much of his time in the garden when on a visit to a country-seat, much to the detriment of the flower-beds and the despair of the gardener.

The summer wore heavily away with Goldsmith. He had not his usual solace of a country retreat; his health was impaired and his spirits depressed. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who perceived the state of his mind, kindly gave him much of his company. In the course of their interchange of thought, Goldsmith suggested to him the story of Ugolino, as a subject for his pencil. The painting founded on it remains a memento of their friendship.

On the 4th of August we find them together at Vauxhall, at that time a place in high vogue, and which had once been to Goldsmith a scene of Oriental splendor and delight. We have,

in fact, in the *Citizen of the World*, a picture of it as it had struck him in former years and in his happier moods. "Upon entering the gardens," says the Chinese philosopher, "I found every sense occupied with more than expected pleasure: the lights everywhere glimmering through the scarcely moving trees; the full-bodied concert bursting on the stillness of the night; the natural concert of the birds in the more retired part of the grove, vying with that which was formed by art; the company gayly dressed, looking satisfaction, and the tables spread with various delicacies,—all conspired to fill my imagination with the visionary happiness of the Arabian law-giver, and lifted me into an ecstasy of admiration." *

Everything now, however, is seen with different eyes; with him it is dissipation without pleasure; and he finds it impossible any longer, by mingling in the gay and giddy throng of apparently prosperous and happy beings, to escape from the carking care which is clinging to his heart.

His kind friend, Cradock, came up to town towards autumn, when all the fashionable world was in the country, to give his wife the benefit of a skilful dentist. He took lodgings in Norfolk Street, to be in Goldsmith's neigh-

* *Citizen of the World*, Let. lxxi.

borhood, and passed most of his mornings with him. "I found him," he says, "much altered and at times very low. He wished me to look over and revise some of his works; but, with a select friend or two, I was more pressing that he should publish by subscription his two celebrated poems of 'The Traveller' and 'The Deserted Village,' with notes." The idea of Cradock was, that the subscription would enable wealthy persons, favorable to Goldsmith, to contribute to his pecuniary relief without wounding his pride. "Goldsmith," said he, "readily gave up to me his private copies, and said, 'Pray do what you please with them.' But whilst he sat near me, he rather submitted to than encouraged my zealous proceedings.

"I one morning called upon him, however, and found him infinitely better than I had expected; and, in a kind of exulting style, he exclaimed, 'Here are some of the best of my prose writings; *I have been hard at work since midnight*, and I desire you to examine them.' 'These,' said I, 'are excellent indeed.' 'They are,' replied he, 'intended as an introduction to a body of arts and sciences.'"

Poor Goldsmith was, in fact, gathering together the fragments of his shipwreck,—the notes and essays, and memoranda collected for his dictionary,—and proposed to found on them

a work in two volumes, to be entitled, *A Survey of Experimental Philosophy*.

The plan of the subscription came to nothing, and the projected survey never was executed. The head might yet devise, but the heart was failing him; his talent at hoping, which gave him buoyancy to carry out his enterprises, was almost at an end.

Cradock's farewell scene with him is told in a simple but touching manner.

"The day before I was to set out for Leicestershire, I insisted upon his dining with us. He replied, 'I will, but on one condition, that you will not ask me to eat anything.' 'Nay,' said I, 'this answer is absolutely unkind, for I had hoped, as we are supplied from the Crown and Anchor, that you would have named something you might have relished.' 'Well,' was the reply, 'if you will but explain it to Mrs. Cradock, I will certainly wait upon you.'

"The Doctor found, as usual, at my apartments, newspapers and pamphlets, and with a pen and ink he amused himself as well as he could. I had ordered from the tavern some fish, a roasted joint of lamb, and a tart; and the Doctor either sat down or walked about just as he pleased. After dinner he took some wine with biscuits; but I was obliged soon to leave him for a while, as I had matters to settle

prior to my next day's journey. On my return, coffee was ready, and the Doctor appeared more cheerful (for Mrs. Cradock was always rather a favorite with him), and in the evening he endeavored to talk and remark as usual, but all was force. He stayed till midnight, and I insisted on seeing him safe home, and we most cordially shook hands at the Temple-gate." Cradock little thought that this was to be their final parting. He looked back to it with mournful recollections in after years, and lamented that he had not remained longer in town, at every inconvenience, to solace the poor broken-spirited poet.

The latter continued in town all the autumn. At the opening of the Opera-House, on the 20th of November, Mrs. Yates, an actress whom he held in great esteem, delivered a poetical exordium of his composition. Beauclerc, in a letter to Lord Charlemont, pronounced it very good, and predicted that it would soon be in all the papers. It does not appear, however, to have been ever published. In his fitful state of mind Goldsmith may have taken no care about it, and thus it has been lost to the world, although it was received with great applause by a crowded and brilliant audience.

A gleam of sunshine breaks through the gloom that was gathering over the poet.

Towards the end of the year he receives another Christmas invitation to Barton. A country Christmas!—with all the cordiality of the fireside circle, and the joyous revelry of the oaken hall,—what a contrast to the loneliness of a bachelor's chambers in the Temple! It is not to be resisted. But how is poor Goldsmith to raise the ways and means? His purse is empty; his booksellers are already in advance to him. As a last resource he applies to Garrick. Their mutual intimacy at Barton may have suggested him as an alternative. The old loan of forty pounds has never been paid; and Newbery's note, pledged as a security, has never been taken up. An additional loan of sixty pounds is now asked for, thus increasing the loan to one hundred; to insure the payment, he now offers, besides Newbery's note, the transfer of the comedy of *The Good-Natured Man* to Drury Lane, with such alterations as Garrick may suggest. Garrick, in reply, evades the offer of the altered comedy, alludes significantly to a new one which Goldsmith had talked of writing for him, and offers to furnish the money required on his own acceptance.

The reply of Goldsmith bespeaks a heart brimful of gratitude and overflowing with fond anticipations of Barton and the smiles of its

fair residents. "My dear friend," writes he, "I thank you. I wish I could do something to serve you. I shall have a comedy for you in a season, or two at farthest, that I believe will be worth your acceptance, for I fancy I will make it a fine thing. You shall have the refusal. . . . I will draw upon you one month after date for sixty pounds, and your acceptance will be ready money, *part of which I want to go down to Barton with.* May God preserve my honest little man, for he has my heart. Ever,

"OLIVER GOLDSMITH."

And having thus scrambled together a little pocket-money, by hard contrivance, poor Goldsmith turns his back upon care and trouble, and Temple quarters, to forget for a time his desolate bachelorhood in the family circle and a Christmas fireside at Barton.

Chapter XIV.

A Return to Drudgery—Forced Gayety—Retreat to the Country—the Poem of "Retaliation"—Portrait of Garrick; of Goldsmith; of Reynolds—Illness of the Poet; his Death—Grief of his Friends—A Last Word Respecting the Jessamy Bride.

THE Barton festivities are over; Christmas, with all its home-felt revelry of the heart, has passed like a dream; the Jessamy Bride has beamed her last smile upon the poor poet, and the early part of 1774 finds him in his now dreary bachelor abode in the Temple, toiling fitfully and hopelessly at a multitude of tasks. His *Animated Nature*, so long delayed, so often interrupted, is at length announced for publication, though it has yet to receive a few finishing touches. He is preparing a third *History of England*, to be compressed and condensed in one volume, for the use of schools. He is revising his *Inquiry into Polite Learning*, for which he

receives the pittance of five guineas, much needed in his present scantiness of purse; he is arranging his *Survey of Experimental Philosophy*, and he is translating the *Comic Romance* of Scarron. Such is a part of the various labors of a drudging, depressing kind, by which his head is made weary and his heart faint. "If there is a mental drudgery," says Sir Walter Scott, "which lowers the spirits and lacerates the nerves, like the toil of a slave, it is that which is exacted by literary composition, when the heart is not in unison with the work upon which the head is employed. Add to the unhappy author's task sickness, sorrow, or the pressure of unfavorable circumstances, and the labor of the bondsman becomes light in comparison." Goldsmith again makes an effort to rally his spirits by going into gay society. "Our Club," writes Beauclerc to Charlemont, on the 12th of February, "has dwindled away to nothing. Sir Joshua and Goldsmith have got into such a round of pleasures that they have no time." This shows how little Beauclerc was the companion of the poet's mind, or could judge of him below the surface. Reynolds, the kind participator in joyless dissipation, could have told a different story of his companion's heart-sick gayety.

In this forced mood Goldsmith gave enter-

tainments in his chambers in the Temple; the last of which was a dinner to Johnson, Reynolds, and others of his intimates, who partook with sorrow and reluctance of his imprudent hospitality. The first course vexed them by its needless profusion. When a second, equally extravagant, was served up, Johnson and Reynolds declined to partake of it; the rest of the company, understanding their motives, followed their example, and the dishes went from the table untasted. Goldsmith felt sensibly this silent and well-intended rebuke.

The gayeties of society, however, cannot medicine for any length of time a mind diseased. Wearied by the distractions and harassed by the expenses of a town-life, which he had not the discretion to regulate, Goldsmith took the resolution, too tardily adopted, of retiring to the serene quiet and cheap and healthful pleasures of the country, and of passing only two months of the year in London. He accordingly made arrangements to sell his right in the Temple chambers, and in the month of March retired to his country quarters at Hyde, there to devote himself to toil. At this dispirited juncture, when inspiration seemed to be at an end, and the poetic fire extinguished, a spark fell on his combustible imagination and set it in a blaze.

He belonged to a temporary association of men of talent, some of them members of the Literary Club, who dined together occasionally at the St. James's Coffee-House. At these dinners, as usual, he was one of the last to arrive. On one occasion, when he was more dilatory than usual, a whim seized the company to write epitaphs on him, as "The late Dr. Goldsmith," and several were thrown off in a playful vein, hitting off his peculiarities. The only one extant was written by Garrick, and has been preserved, very probably, by its pungency:

"Here lies poet Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

Goldsmith did not relish the sarcasm, especially as coming from such a quarter. He was not very ready at repartee; but he took his time, and in the interval of his various tasks concocted a series of epigrammatic sketches, under the title of "Retaliation," in which the characters of his distinguished intimates were admirably hit off, with a mixture of generous praise and good-humored raillery. In fact, the poem, for its graphic truth, its nice discrimination, its terse good sense, and its shrewd knowledge of the world, must have electrified the

club almost as much as the first appearance of "The Traveller," and let them still deeper into the character and talents of the man they had been accustomed to consider as their butt. "Retaliation," in a word, closed his accounts with the club, and balanced all his previous deficiencies.

The portrait of David Garrick is one of the most elaborate in the poem. When the poet came to touch it off, he had some lurking piques to gratify, which the recent attack had revived. He may have forgotten David's cavalier treatment of him, in the early days of his comparative obscurity; he may have forgiven his refusal of his plays; but Garrick had been capricious in his conduct in the times of their recent intercourse: sometimes treating him with gross familiarity, at other times affecting dignity and reserve, and assuming airs of superiority; frequently he had been facetious and witty in company at his expense, and lastly he had been guilty of the couplet just quoted. Goldsmith, therefore, touched off the lights and shadows of his character with a free hand, and at the same time gave a side-hit at his old rival, Kelly, and his critical persecutor, Kenrick, in making them sycophantic satellites of the actor. Goldsmith, however, was void of gall even in his revenge,

and his very satire was more humorous than caustic :

" Here lies David Garrick, describe him who can,
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man ;
As an actor, confess'd without rival to shine ;
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line :
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colors he spread,
And beplaster'd with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting ;
'T was only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turn'd and he varied full ten times a day :
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick ;
He cast off his friends as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew, when he pleased, he could whistle them back.
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,
And the puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame :
Till his relish, grown callous almost to disease,
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, and Woodfalls so grave,
What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave !
How did Grub Street re-echo the shouts that you raised
While he was be-Rosciused and you were be-praised !
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,

To act as an angel and mix with the skies:
Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will;
Old Shakspeare receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above."

This portion of "Retaliation" soon brought a retort from Garrick, which we insert, as giving something of a likeness of Goldsmith, though in broad caricature:

"'Here, Hermes,' says Jove, who with nectar was mellow,
'Go fetch me some clay—I will make an odd fellow:
Right and wrong shall be jumbled, much gold and some dross,
Without cause be he pleased, without cause be he cross;
Be sure, as I work, to throw in contradictions,
A great love of truth, yet a mind turn'd to fictions;
Now mix these ingredients, which, warm'd in the baking,
Turn'd to *learning* and *gaming*, *religion* and *raking*.
With the love of a wench let his writings be chaste;
Tip his tongue with strange matter, his lips with fine taste:
That the rake and the poet o'er all may prevail,
Set fire to the head and set fire to the tail;
For the joy of each sex on the world I 'll bestow it,
This scholar, rake, Christian, dupe, gamester, and poet.

Though a mixture so odd, he shall merit great fame,
And among brother mortals be Goldsmith his name;
When on earth this strange meteor no more shall appear,
You, Hermes, shall fetch him, to make us sport here.'"

The charge of raking, so repeatedly advanced in the foregoing lines, must be considered a sportive one, founded, perhaps, on an incident or two within Garrick's knowledge, but not borne out by the course of Goldsmith's life. He seems to have had a tender sentiment for the sex, but perfectly free from libertinism. Neither was he an habitual gamester. The strictest scrutiny has detected no settled vice of the kind. He was fond of a game of cards, but an unskilful and careless player. Cards in those days were universally introduced into society. High play was, in fact, a fashionable amusement, as at one time was deep drinking; and a man might occasionally lose large sums, and be beguiled into deep potations, without incurring the character of a gamester or a drunkard. Poor Goldsmith, on his advent into high society, assumed fine notions with fine clothes; he was thrown occasionally among high players, men of fortune who could sport their cool hundred as carelessly as his early comrades at Ballymahon could

their half-crowns. Being at all times magnificent in money-matters, he may have played with them in their own way, without considering that what was sport to them to him was ruin. Indeed, part of his financial embarrassments may have arisen from losses of the kind, incurred inadvertently, not in the indulgence of a habit. "I do not believe Goldsmith to have deserved the name of gamester," said one of his contemporaries; "he liked cards very well, as other people do, and lost and won occasionally, but as far as I saw or heard, and I had many opportunities of hearing, never any considerable sum. If he gamed with any one, it was probably with Beauclerc, but I do not know that such was the case."

"Retaliation," as we have already observed, was thrown off in parts, at intervals, and was never completed. Some characters, originally intended to be introduced, remained unattempted; others were but partially sketched—such as the one of Reynolds, the friend of his heart, and which he commenced with a felicity which makes us regret that it should remain unfinished.

"Here Reynolds is laid, and to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind.
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland;

Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart.
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill he was still hard of hearing:
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.
By flattery unspoiled"——

The friendly portrait stood unfinished on the easel; the hand of the artist had failed! An access of a local complaint, under which he had suffered for some time past, added to a general prostration of health, brought Goldsmith back to town before he had well settled himself in the country. The local complaint subsided, but was followed by a low nervous fever. He was not aware of his critical situation, and intended to be at the club on the 25th of March, on which occasion Charles Fox, Sir Charles Bunbury (one of the Horneck connection), and two other new members were to be present. In the afternoon, however, he felt so unwell as to take to his bed, and his symptoms soon acquired sufficient force to keep him there. His malady fluctuated for several days, and hopes were entertained of his recovery, but they proved fallacious. He had skilful medical aid and faithful nursing, but he would not

follow the advice of his physicians, and persisted in the use of James's powders, which he had once found beneficial, but which were now injurious to him. His appetite was gone, his strength failed him, but his mind remained clear, and was perhaps too active for his frame. Anxieties and disappointments which had previously sapped his constitution, doubtless aggravated his present complaint and rendered him sleepless. In reply to an inquiry of his physician, he acknowledged that his mind was ill at ease. This was his last reply: he was too weak to talk, and in general took no notice of what was said to him. He sank at last into a deep sleep, and it was hoped a favorable crisis had arrived. He awoke, however, in strong convulsions, which continued without intermission until he expired, on the fourth of April, at five o'clock in the morning; being in the forty-sixth year of his age.

His death was a shock to the literary world, and a deep affliction to a wide circle of intimates and friends; for, with all his foibles and peculiarities, he was fully as much beloved as he was admired. Burke, on hearing the news, burst into tears. Sir Joshua Reynolds threw by his pencil for the day, and grieved more than he had done in times of great family distress. "I was abroad at the time of his death,"

writes Dr. M'Donnell, the youth whom when in distress he had employed as an amanuensis, "and I wept bitterly when the intelligence first reached me. A blank came over my heart as if I had lost one of my nearest relatives, and was followed for some days by a feeling of despondency." Johnson felt the blow deeply and gloomily. In writing some time afterwards to Boswell, he observed, "Of poor Dr. Goldsmith there is little to be told more than the papers have made public. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of the opinion that he owed no less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before?"

Among his debts were seventy-nine pounds due to his tailor, Mr. William Filby, from whom he had received a new suit but a few days before his death. "My father," said the younger Filby, "though a loser to that amount, attributed no blame to Goldsmith; he had been a good customer, and, had he lived, would have paid every farthing." Others of his tradespeople evinced the same confidence in his integrity, notwithstanding his heedlessness. Two sister milliners in Temple Lane, who had been accustomed to deal with

him, were concerned when told, some time before his death, of his pecuniary embarrassments. "Oh, sir," said they to Mr. Cradock, "sooner persuade him to let us work for him gratis than apply to any other; we are sure he will pay us when he can."

On the stairs of his apartment there was the lamentation of the old and infirm, and the sobbing of women; poor objects of his charity, to whom he had never turned a deaf ear, even when struggling himself with poverty.

But there was one mourner whose enthusiasm for his memory, could it have been foreseen, might have soothed the bitterness of death. After the coffin had been screwed down, a lock of his hair was requested for a lady, a particular friend, who wished to preserve it as a remembrance. It was the beautiful Mary Horneck—the Jessamy Bride. The coffin was opened again, and a lock of hair cut off; which she treasured to her dying day. Poor Goldsmith! could he have foreseen that such a memorial of him was to be thus cherished!

One word more concerning this lady, to whom we have so often ventured to advert. She survived almost to the present day. Hazlitt met her at Northcote's painting-room, about twenty years since, as Mrs. Gwyn, the

widow of a General Gwyn of the army. She was at that time upwards of seventy years of age. Still, he said, she was beautiful, beautiful even in years. After she was gone Hazlitt remarked how handsome she still was. "I do not know," said Northcote, "why she is so kind as to come to see me, except that I am the last link in the chain that connects her with all those she most esteemed when young—Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith—and remind her of the most delightful period of her life."

"Not only so," observed Hazlitt, "but you remember what she was at twenty; and you thus bring back to her the triumphs of her youth—that pride of beauty, which must be the more fondly cherished as it has no external vouchers, and lives chiefly in the bosom of its once lovely possessor. In her, however, the Graces had triumphed over time; she was one of Ninon de l'Enclos's people, of the last of the immortals. I could almost fancy the shade of Goldsmith in the room, looking round with complacency."

The Jessamy Bride survived her sister upwards of forty years, and died in 1840, within a few days of completing her eighty-eighth year. "She had gone through all the stages of life," says Northcote, "and had lent a

grace to each." However gayly she may have sported with the half-concealed admiration of the poor awkward poet in the heyday of her youth and beauty, and however much it may have been made a subject of teasing by her youthful companions, she evidently prided herself in after years upon having been an object of his affectionate regard ; it certainly rendered her interesting throughout life in the eyes of his admirers, and has hung a poetical wreath above her grave.

Chapter XV.

The Funeral—The Monument—The Epitaph—Concluding Remarks.

IN the warm feeling of the moment, while the remains of the poet were scarce cold, it was determined by his friends to honor them by a public funeral and a tomb in Westminster Abbey. His very pall-bearers were designated: Lord Shelburne, Lord Lowth, Sir Joshua Reynolds; the Hon. Mr. Beauclerc, Mr. Burke, and David Garrick. This feeling cooled down, however, when it was discovered that he died in debt, and had not left wherewithal to pay for such expensive obsequies. Five days after his death, therefore, at five o'clock of Saturday evening, the 9th of April, he was privately interred in the burying-ground of the Temple Church; a few persons attending as mourners, among whom we do not find specified any of his peculiar and distinguished friends. The chief mourner was Sir Joshua Reynolds's nephew, Palmer,

afterwards Dean of Cashel. One person, however, from whom it was but little to be expected, attended the funeral and evinced real sorrow on the occasion. This was Hugh Kelly, once the dramatic rival of the deceased, and often, it is said, his anonymous assailant in the newspapers. If he had really been guilty of this basest of literary offences, he was punished by the stings of remorse, for we are told that he shed bitter tears over the grave of the man he had injured. His tardy atonement only provoked the lash of some unknown satirist, as the following lines will show:

"Hence Kelly, who years, without honor or shame,
Had been sticking his bodkin in Oliver's fame,
Who thought, like the Tartar, by this to inherit
His genius, his learning, simplicity, spirit;
Now set every feature to weep o'er his fate,
And acts as a mourner to blubber in state."

One base wretch deserves to be mentioned, the reptile Kenrick, who, after having repeatedly slandered Goldsmith, while living, had the audacity to insult his memory when dead. The following distich is sufficient to show his malignancy, and to hold him up to execration:

"By his own art, who justly died,
A blund'ring, artless suicide:
Share, earthworms, share, since now he's dead,
His megrim, maggot-bitten head."

This scurrilous epitaph produced a burst of public indignation, that awed for a time even the infamous Kenrick into silence. On the other hand, the press teemed with tributes in verse and prose to the memory of the deceased; all evincing the mingled feeling of admiration for the author and affection for the man.

Not long after his death the Literary Club set on foot a subscription, and raised a fund to erect a monument to his memory, in Westminster Abbey. It was executed by Nollekens, and consisted simply of a bust of the poet in profile, in high relief, in a medallion, and was placed in the area of a pointed arch, over the south door in Poets' Corner, between the monuments of Gay and the Duke of Argyle. Johnson furnished a Latin epitaph, which was read at the table of Sir Joshua Reynolds, where several members of the club and other friends of the deceased were present. Though considered by them a masterly composition, they thought the literary character of the poet not defined with sufficient exactness, and they preferred that the epitaph should be in English rather than Latin, as "the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works were likely to be so lasting an ornament."

These objections were reduced to writing, to

be respectfully submitted to Johnson, but such was the awe entertained of his frown, that every one shrank from putting his name first to the instrument; whereupon their names were written about it in a circle, making what mutinous sailors call a Round Robin. Johnson received it half graciously, half grimly. "He was willing," he said, "to modify the sense of the epitaph in any manner the gentlemen pleased; *but he never would consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription.*" Seeing the names of Dr. Warton and Edmund Burke among the signers, "he wondered," he said, "that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool; and should have thought that Mund Burke would have had more sense." The following is the epitaph as it stands inscribed on a white marble tablet beneath the bust:

"OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,*
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
Non tetigit,

* The following translation is from Croker's edition of Boswell's *Johnson:*

"OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH—
A Poet, Naturalist, and Historian,
Who left scarcely any style of writing
Untouched,

Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit:
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator:
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus:
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio.
Natus in Hiberniâ Forniæ Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI.*;
Eblanæ literis institutus;
Obiit Londini,
April IV. MDCCLXXIV."

And touched nothing that he did not adorn:
Of all the passions,
Whether smiles were to be moved
Or tears,
A powerful yet gentle master;
In genius, sublime, vivid, versatile,
In style, elevated, clear, elegant—
The love of companions,
The fidelity of friends,
And the veneration of readers,
Have by this monument honored the memory.
He was born in Ireland,
At a place called Pallas,
[In the parish] of Forney, [and county] of Longford,
On the 29th Nov., 1731.
Educated at [the University of] Dublin,
And died in London,
4th April, 1774.

* Not correct. The true date of birth was 10th Nov., 1728, as given on page 5, vol. i.

We shall not pretend to follow these anecdotes of the life of Goldsmith with any critical dissertation on his writings; their merits have long since been fully discussed, and their station in the scale of literary merit permanently established. They have outlasted generations of works of higher power and wider scope, and will continue to outlast succeeding generations, for they have that magic charm of style by which works are embalmed to perpetuity. Neither shall we attempt a regular analysis of the character of the poet, but will indulge in a few desultory remarks, in addition to those scattered throughout the preceding chapters.

Never was the trite, because sage, apophthegm that "The child is father to the man," more fully verified than in the case of Goldsmith. He is shy, awkward, and blundering in childhood, yet full of sensibility; he is a butt for the jeers and jokes of his companions, but apt to surprise and confound them by sudden and witty repartees; he is dull and stupid at his tasks, yet an eager and intelligent devourer of the travelling tales and campaigning stories of his half-military pedagogue; he may be a dunce, but he is already a rhymer; and his early scintillations of poetry awaken the expectations of his friends. He seems from infancy to have been compounded of two na-

tures, one bright, the other blundering; or to have had fairy gifts laid in his cradle by the "good people" who haunted his birthplace, the old goblin mansion on the banks of the Inny.

He carries with him the wayward elfin spirit, if we may so term it, throughout his career. His fairy gifts are of no avail at school, academy, or college; they unfit him for close study and practical science, and render him heedless of everything that does not address itself to his poetical imagination and genial and festive feelings; they dispose him to break away from restraint, to stroll about hedges, green lanes, and haunted streams, to revel with jovial companions, or to rove the country like a gypsy in quest of odd adventures.

As if confiding in these delusive gifts, he takes no heed of the present nor care for the future, lays no regular and solid foundation of knowledge, follows out no plan, adopts and discards those recommended by his friends, at one time prepares for the ministry, next turns to the law, and then fixes upon medicine. He repairs to Edinburgh, the great emporium of medical science, but the fairy gifts accompany him; he idles and frolics away his time there, imbibing only such knowledge as is agreeable

to him; makes an excursion to the poetical regions of the Highlands; and having walked the hospitals for the customary time, sets off to ramble over the Continent, in quest of novelty rather than knowledge. His whole tour is a poetical one. He fancies he is playing the philosopher while he is really playing the poet; and though professedly he attends lectures and visits foreign universities, so deficient is he on his return, in the studies for which he set out, that he fails in an examination as a surgeon's mate; and while figuring as a doctor of medicine, is outvied on a point of practice by his apothecary. Baffled in every regular pursuit, after trying in vain some of the humbler callings of commonplace life, he is driven almost by chance to the exercise of his pen, and here the fairy gifts come to his assistance. For a long time, however, he seems unaware of the magic properties of that pen: he uses it only as a makeshift until he can find a *legitimate* means of support. He is not a learned man, and can write but meagrely and at second-hand on learned subjects; but he has a quick convertible talent that seizes lightly on the points of knowledge necessary to the illustration of a theme; his writings for a time are desultory, the fruits of what he has seen and felt, or what he has recently and hastily read;

but his gifted pen transmutes everything into gold, and his own genial nature reflects its sunshine through his pages.

Still unaware of his powers he throws off his writings anonymously, to go with the writings of less favored men; and it is a long time, and after a bitter struggle with poverty and humiliation, before he acquires confidence in his literary talent as a means of support, and begins to dream of reputation.

From this time his pen is a wand of power in his hand, and he has only to use it discreetly to make it competent to all his wants. But discretion is not a part of Goldsmith's nature; and it seems the property of these fairy gifts to be accompanied by moods and temperaments to render their effect precarious. The heedlessness of his early days; his disposition for social enjoyment; his habit of throwing the present on the neck of the future, still continue. His expenses forerun his means; he incurs debts on the faith of what his magic pen is to produce, and then, under the pressure of his debts, sacrifices its productions for prices far below their value. It is a redeeming circumstance in his prodigality that it is lavished oftener upon others than upon himself: he gives without thought or stint, and is the continual dupe of his benevolence and his trustfulness

in human nature. We may say of him as he says of one of his heroes, "He could not stifle the natural impulse which he had to do good, but frequently borrowed money to relieve the distressed; and when he knew not conveniently where to borrow, he has been observed to shed tears as he passed through the wretched suppliants who attended his gate. . . .

"His simplicity in trusting persons whom he had no previous reasons to place confidence in, seems to be one of those lights of his character which, while they impeach his understanding, do honor to his benevolence. The low and the timid are ever suspicious; but a heart impressed with honorable sentiments, expects from others sympathetic sincerity." *

His heedlessness in pecuniary matters, which had rendered his life a struggle with poverty even in the days of his obscurity, rendered the struggle still more intense when his fairy gifts had elevated him into the society of the wealthy and luxurious, and imposed on his simple and generous spirit fancied obligations to a more ample and bounteous display.

"How comes it," says a recent and ingenious critic, "that in all the miry paths of life which he had trod, no speck ever sullied the robe of his modest and graceful Muse? How

* Goldsmith's *Life of Nash*.

amidst all the love of inferior company, which never to the last forsook him, did he keep his genius so free from every touch of vulgarity?"

We answer that it was owing to the innate purity and goodness of his nature; there was nothing in it that assimilated to vice and vulgarity. Though his circumstances often compelled him to associate with the poor, they never could betray him into companionship with the depraved. His relish for humor and for the study of character, as we have before observed, brought him often into convivial company of a vulgar kind; but he discriminated between their vulgarity and their amusing qualities, or rather wrought from the whole those familiar pictures of life which form the staple of his most popular writings.

Much, too, of this intact purity of heart may be ascribed to the lessons of his infancy under the paternal roof; to the gentle, benevolent, elevated, unworldly maxims of his father, who "passing rich with forty pounds a year," infused a spirit into his child which riches could not deprave nor poverty degrade. Much of his boyhood, too, had been passed in the household of his uncle, the amiable and generous Contarine, where he talked of literature with the good pastor, and practised music with his daughter, and delighted them both by his

juvenile attempts at poetry. These early associations breathed a grace and refinement into his mind and tuned it up, after the rough sports on the green, or the frolics at the tavern. These led him to turn from the roaring glees of the club, to listen to the harp of his cousin Jane; and from the rustic triumph of "throwing sledge," to a stroll with his flute along the pastoral banks of the Inny.

The gentle spirit of his father walked with him through life, a pure and virtuous monitor; and in all the vicissitudes of his career we find him ever more chastened in mind by the sweet and holy recollections of the home of his infancy.

It has been questioned whether he really had any religious feeling. Those who raise the question have never considered well his writings; his *Vicar of Wakefield*, and his pictures of the Village Pastor, present religion under its most endearing forms, and with a feeling that could only flow from the deep convictions of the heart. When his fair travelling companions at Paris urged him to read the Church Service on a Sunday, he replied that "he was not worthy to do it." He had seen in early life the sacred offices performed by his father and his brother with a solemnity which had sanctified them in his memory; how could he

presume to undertake such functions? His religion has been called in question by Johnson and by Boswell: he certainly had not the gloomy hypochondriacal piety of the one, nor the babbling mouth-piety of the other; but the spirit of Christian charity breathed forth in his writings and illustrated in his conduct, gives us reason to believe he had the indwelling religion of the soul.

We have made sufficient comments in the preceding chapters on his conduct in elevated circles of literature and fashion. The fairy gifts which took him there were not accompanied by the gifts and graces necessary to sustain him in that artificial sphere. He can neither play the learned sage with Johnson, nor the fine gentleman with Beauclerc; though he has a mind replete with wisdom and natural shrewdness, and a spirit free from vulgarity. The blunders of a fertile but hurried intellect, and the awkward display of the student assuming the man of fashion, fix on him a character for absurdity and vanity which, like the charge of lunacy, it is hard to disprove, however weak the grounds of the charge and strong the facts in opposition to it.

In truth, he is never truly in his place in these learned and fashionable circles, which talk and live for display. It is not the kind

of society he craves. His heart yearns for domestic life; it craves familiar, confiding intercourse, family firesides, the guileless and happy company of children; these bring out the heartiest and sweetest sympathies of his nature.

"Had it been his fate," says the critic we have already quoted, "to meet a woman who could have loved him, despite his faults, and respected him despite his foibles, we cannot but think that his life and his genius would have been much more harmonious; his desultory affections would have been concentred, his craving self-love appeased, his pursuits more settled, his character more solid. A nature like Goldsmith's, so affectionate, so confiding—so susceptible to simple, innocent enjoyments—so dependent on others for the sunshine of existence, does not flower if deprived of the atmosphere of home."

The cravings of his heart in this respect are evident, we think, throughout his career; and if we have dwelt with more significancy than others upon his intercourse with the beautiful Horneck family, it is because we fancied we could detect, amid his playful attentions to one of its members, a lurking sentiment of tenderness, kept down by conscious poverty and a humiliating idea of personal defects. A hope-

less feeling of this kind—the last a man would communicate to his friends—might account for much of that fitfulness of conduct, and that gathering melancholy, remarked, but not comprehended by his associates, during the last year or two of his life ; and may have been one of the troubles of the mind which aggravated his last illness, and only terminated with his death.

We shall conclude these desultory remarks with a few which have been used by us on a former occasion. From the general tone of Goldsmith's biography, it is evident that his faults, at the worst, were but negative, while his merits were great and decided. He was no one's enemy but his own ; his errors, in the main, inflicted evil on none but himself, and were so blended with humorous and even affecting circumstances, as to disarm anger and conciliate kindness. Where eminent talent is united to spotless virtue, we are awed and dazzled into admiration, but our admiration is apt to be cold and reverential ; while there is something in the harmless infirmities of a good and great but erring individual, that pleads touchingly to our nature ; and we turn more kindly towards the object of our idolatry, when we find that, like ourselves, he is mortal and is frail. The epithet so often heard, and in such

kindly tones, of "Poor Goldsmith," speaks volumes. Few, who consider the real compound of admirable and whimsical qualities which form his character, would wish to prune away his eccentricities, trim its grotesque luxuriance, and clip it down to the decent formalities of rigid virtue. "Let not his frailties be remembered," said Johnson; "he was a very great man." But, for our part, we rather say, "Let them be remembered," since their tendency is to endear; and we question whether he himself would not feel gratified in hearing his reader, after dwelling with admiration on the proofs of his greatness, close the volume with the kind-hearted phrase, so fondly and familiarly ejaculated, of "POOR GOLDSMITH."

Margaret Miller Davidson.

HERETOFORE INCLUDED IN THE VOLUME ENTITLED
BIOGRAPHIES AND MISCELLANIES.

[A biographical sketch of Lucretia Maria Davidson, who died on the 27th of August, 1825, just a month before her seventeenth birthday, was written by Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, and prefixed to a collection of her poetic remains, published in 1829, under the title of *Amir Khan and Other Poems.** In a notice of this volume in the *London Quarterly Review*, Southey remarks: "In our own language, except in the cases of Chatterton and Kirke White, we can call to mind no instance of so early, so ardent, and so fatal a pursuit of intellectual advancement."

The biography of Margaret Miller Davidson, her no less remarkable sister, who died in 1838, four months before she had attained her sixteenth year, was prepared by Mr. Irving in 1840, and prefixed to an edition of her literary remains in 1841. The copyright was transferred to her mother, at whose request the Memoir was written, Mr. Irving reserving merely the right to publish it at any time in connection with his other writings. It has been long out of print, and is now for the first time included with his works.

In allusion to this touching narrative, the author remarks in one of his letters: "In the Spring I shall publish a biography of Miss Margaret Davidson, with her posthumous writings. She was a sister of Lucretia Davidson, whose biography you may have read,—a lovely American girl, of surprising precocity of poetical talent. The one whose biography I have just written died a year or two since. It is made up in a great degree from memorandums furnished by her mother, who is almost of as poetical a temperament as her children. The most affecting passages of the biography are quoted literally from her manuscript." —ED.]

* A more copious Memoir was afterwards written by Miss Sedgwick for *Sparks's American Biography.*

MARGARET DAVIDSON.

THE reading world has long set a cherishing value on the name of Lucretia Davidson, a lovely American girl, who, after giving early promise of rare poetic excellence, was snatched from existence in the seventeenth year of her age. An interesting biography of her by President Morse of the American Society of Arts, was published shortly after her death ; another has since appeared from the classic pen of Miss Sedgwick, and her name has derived additional celebrity in Great Britain from an able article by Robert Southey, inserted some years since in the *London Quarterly Review.*

An intimate acquaintance in early life with some of the relatives of Miss Davidson had caused me, while in Europe, to read with great interest everything concerning her ; when, therefore, in 1838, about a year after my return to the United States, I was told,

while in New York, that Mrs. Davidson, the mother of the deceased, was in the city and desirous of consulting me about a new edition of her daughter's works, I lost no time in waiting upon her. Her appearance corresponded with the interesting idea given of her in her daughter's biography; she was feeble and emaciated, and supported by pillows in an easy-chair, but there were the lingerings of grace and beauty in her form and features, and her eyes still beamed with intelligence and sensibility.

While conversing with her on the subject of her daughter's works I observed a young girl, apparently not more than eleven years of age, moving quietly about her; occasionally arranging a pillow, and at the same time listening earnestly to our conversation. There was an intellectual beauty about this child that struck me; and that was heightened by a blushing diffidence when Mrs. Davidson presented her to me as her daughter Margaret. Shortly afterwards, on her leaving the room, her mother, seeing that she had attracted my attention, spoke of her as having evinced the same early poetical talent that had distinguished her sister, and as evidence, showed me several copies of verses remarkable for such a child. On further inquiry, I found that

she had very nearly the same moral and physical constitution, and was prone to the same feverish excitement of the mind, and kindling of the imagination that had acted so powerfully on the fragile frame of her sister Lucretia. I cautioned her mother, therefore, against fostering her poetic vein, and advised such studies and pursuits as would tend to strengthen her judgment, calm and regulate the sensibilities, and enlarge that common sense which is the only safe foundation for all intellectual superstructure.

I found Mrs. Davidson fully aware of the importance of such a course of treatment, and disposed to pursue it, but saw at the same time that she would have difficulty to carry it into effect; having to contend with the additional excitement produced in the mind of this sensitive little being by the example of her sister, and the intense enthusiasm she evinced concerning her.

Three years elapsed before I again saw the subject of this memoir. She was then residing with her mother at a rural retreat in the neighborhood of New York. The interval that had elapsed had rapidly developed the powers of her mind and heightened the loveliness of her person, but my apprehensions had been verified. The soul was wearing out the

body. Preparations were making to take her on a tour for the benefit of her health, and her mother appeared to flatter herself that it might prove efficacious; but when I noticed the fragile delicacy of her form, the hectic bloom of her cheek, and the almost unearthly lustre of her eye, I felt convinced that she was not long for this world; in truth, she already appeared more spiritual than mortal. We parted, and I never saw her more. Within three years afterwards a number of manuscripts were placed in my hands, as all that was left of her. They were accompanied by copious memoranda concerning her, furnished by her mother at my request. From these I have digested and arranged the following particulars, adopting in many places the original manuscript, without alteration. In fact, the narrative will be found almost as illustrative of the character of the mother as of the child. They were singularly identified in taste, feelings, and pursuits; tenderly entwined together by maternal and filial affection: they reflected an inexpressibly touching grace and interest upon each other by this holy relationship, and, to my mind, it would be marring one of the most beautiful and affecting groups in the history of modern literature, to sunder them.

Margaret Miller Davidson, the youngest

daughter of Dr. Oliver and Mrs. Margaret Davidson, was born at the family residence on Lake Champlain, in the village of Plattsburgh, on the 26th of March, 1823. She evinced fragility of constitution from her very birth. Her sister Lucretia, whose brief poetical career has been so celebrated in literary history, was her early and fond attendant, and some of her most popular lays were composed with the infant sporting in her arms. She used to gaze upon her little sister with intense delight, and, remarking the uncommon brightness and beauty of her eyes, would exclaim, "She must, she will be a poet!" The exclamation was natural enough in an enthusiastic girl who regarded everything through the medium of her ruling passion; but it was treasured up by her mother, and considered almost prophetic. Lucretia did not live to see her prediction verified. Her brief sojourn upon earth was over before Margaret was quite two years and a half old; yet, to use her mother's fond expressions, "On ascending to the skies, it seemed as if her poetic mantle fell, like a robe of light, on her infant sister."

Margaret, from the first dawnings of intellect, gave evidence of being no common child: her ideas and expressions were not like those of other children, and often startled by their

precocity. Her sister's death had made a strong impression on her, and, though so extremely young, she already understood and appreciated Lucretia's character. An evidence of this, and of the singular precocity of thought and expression just noticed, occurred but a few months afterwards. As Mrs. Davidson was seated at twilight, conversing with a female friend, Margaret entered the room with a light elastic step, for which she was remarked.

"That child never walks," said the lady; then turning to her, "Margaret, where are you flying now?" said she.

"To Heaven!" replied she, pointing up with her finger, "to meet my sister Lucretia, when I get my new wings."

"Your new wings! When will you get them?"

"Oh, soon, very soon; and then I shall fly!"

"She loved," says her mother, "to sit hour after hour on a cushion at my feet, her little arms resting upon my lap, and her full dark eyes fixed upon mine, listening to anecdotes of her sister's life and details of the events which preceded her death, often exclaiming, while her face beamed with mingled emotions, 'Oh, mamma, I will try to fill her place! Oh, teach me to be like her!'"

Much of Mrs. Davidson's time was now devoted to her daily instruction; noticing, however, her lively sensibility, the rapid development of her mind, and her eagerness for knowledge, her lessons were entirely oral, for she feared for the present to teach her to read, lest, by too early and severe application, she should injure her delicate frame. She had nearly attained her fourth year before she was taught to spell. Ill health then obliged Mrs. Davidson, for the space of a year, to intrust her tuition to a lady in Canada, a valued friend, who had other young girls under her care. When she returned home she could read fluently and had commenced letters in writing. It was now decided that she should not be placed in any public seminary, but that her education should be conducted by her mother. The task was rendered delightful by the docility of the pupil; by her affectionate feelings, and quick kindling sensibilities. This maternal instruction, while it kept her apart from the world, and fostered a singular purity and innocence of thought, contributed greatly to enhance her imaginative powers, for the mother partook largely of the poetical temperament of the child; it was, in fact, one poetical spirit ministering to another.

Among the earliest indications of the poetical

character in this child were her perceptions of the beauty of natural scenery. Her home was in a picturesque neighborhood, calculated to awaken and foster such perceptions. The following description of it is taken from one of her own writings: "There stood on the banks of the Saranac a small neat cottage, which peeped forth from the surrounding foliage, the image of rural quiet and contentment. An old-fashioned piazza extended along the front, shaded with vines and honeysuckles; the turf on the bank of the river was of the richest and brighest emerald; and the wild rose and sweet-brier, which twined over the neat enclosure, seemed to bloom with more delicate freshness and perfume within the bounds of this earthly paradise. The scenery around was wildly yet beautifully romantic; the clear blue river, glancing and sparkling at its feet, seemed only as a preparation for another and more magnificent view, when the stream, gliding on to the west, was buried in the broad white bosom of Champlain, which stretched back, wave after wave in the distance, until lost in faint blue mists that veiled the sides of its guardian mountains, seeming more lovely from their indistinctness."

Such were the natural scenes which presented themselves to her dawning perceptions, and

she is said to have evinced, from her earliest childhood, a remarkable sensibility to their charms. A beautiful tree, or shrub, or flower, would fill her with delight; she would note with surprising discrimination the various effects of the weather upon the surrounding landscape; the mountains wrapt in clouds; the torrents roaring down their sides in times of tempest; the "bright warm sunshine," the "cooling shower," the "pale cold moon," for such was already her poetical phraseology. A bright starlight night, also, would seem to awaken a mysterious rapture in her infant bosom, and one of her early expressions in speaking of the stars, was, that they "shone like the eyes of angels."

One of the most beautiful parts of the maternal instruction was in guiding these kindling perceptions from Nature up to Nature's God.

"I cannot say," observes her mother, "at what age her religious impressions were imbibed. They seemed to be interwoven with her existence. From the very first exercise of reason she evinced strong devotional feelings, and, although she loved play, she would at any time prefer seating herself beside me, and, with every faculty absorbed in the subject, listen while I attempted to recount the wonders of Providence, and point out the wisdom and

benevolence of God, as manifested in the works of creation. Her young heart would swell with rapture, and the tear would tremble in her eye, when I explained to her, that He who clothed the trees with verdure, and gave the rose its bloom, had also created her with capacities to enjoy their beauties: that the same power which clothed the mountains with sublimity, made her happiness His daily care. Thus a sentiment of gratitude and affection towards the Creator entered into all her emotions of delight at the wonders and beauties of creation."

There is nothing more truly poetical than religion when properly inculcated, and it will be found that this early piety, thus amiably instilled, had the happiest effect upon her throughout life; elevating and ennobling her genius; lifting her above everything gross and sordid; attuning her thoughts to pure and lofty themes; heightening rather than impairing her enjoyments, and at all times giving an ethereal lightness to her spirit. To use her mother's words, "she was like a bird on the wing; her fairy form scarcely seemed to touch the earth as she passed." She was at times in a kind of ecstasy from the excitement of her imagination and the exuberance of her pleasurable sensations. In such moods every object

of natural beauty inspired a degree of rapture always mingled with a feeling of gratitude to the Being "who had made so many beautiful things for her." In such moods, too, her little heart would overflow with love to all around; indeed, adds her mother, to love and be beloved was necessary to her existence. Private prayer became a habit with her at a very early age; it was almost a spontaneous expression of her feelings, the breathings of an affectionate and delighted heart.

"By the time she was six years old," says Mrs. Davidson, "her language assumed an elevated tone, and her mind seemed filled with poetic imagery, blended with veins of religious thought. At this period I was chiefly confined to my room by debility. She was my companion and friend, and, as the greater part of my time was devoted to her instruction, she advanced rapidly in her studies. She read not only well, but elegantly. Her love of reading amounted almost to a passion, and her intelligence surpassed belief. Strangers viewed with astonishment a child little more than six years old, reading with enthusiastic delight Thomson's 'Seasons,' the 'Pleasures of Hope,' Cowper's 'Task,' the writings of Milton, Byron, and Scott, and marking, with taste and discrimination, the passages which struck

her. The sacred writings were her daily studies; with her little Bible on her lap, she usually seated herself near me, and there read a chapter from the holy volume. This was a duty which she was taught not to perform lightly, and we have frequently spent two hours in reading and remarking upon the contents of a chapter."

A tendency to "lisp in numbers," was observed in her about this time. She frequently made little impromptus in rhyme, without seeming to be conscious that there was anything peculiar in the habit. On one occasion, while standing by a window at which her mother was seated, and looking out upon a lovely landscape, she exclaimed,

> "See those lofty, those grand trees;
> Their high tops waving in the breeze;
> They cast their shadows on the ground,
> And spread their fragrance all around."

Her mother, who had several times been struck by little rhyming ejaculations of the kind, now handed her writing implements, and requested her to write down what she had just uttered. She appeared surprised at the request, but complied; writing it down as if it had been prose, without arranging it in a stanza, or commencing the lines with capitals; not seeming aware that she had rhymed. The notice

attracted to this impromptu, however, had its effect, whether for good or for evil. From that time she wrote some scraps of poetry, or rather rhyme, every day, which would be treasured up with delight by her mother, who watched with trembling, yet almost fascinated anxiety, these premature blossomings of poetic fancy.

On another occasion, towards sunset, as Mrs. Davidson was seated by the window of her bedroom, little Margaret ran in, greatly excited, exclaiming that there was an awful thunder-gust rising, and that the clouds were black as midnight.

"I gently drew her to my bosom," says Mrs. Davidson, "and after I had soothed her agitation, she seated herself at my feet, laid her head in my lap, and gazed at the rising storm. As the thunder rolled, she clung closer to my knees, and when the tempest burst in all its fury, I felt her tremble. I passed my arms round her, but soon found it was not fear that agitated her. Her eyes kindled as she watched the warring elements, until, extending her hand, she exclaimed,

" ' The lightning plays along the sky,
The thunder rolls and bursts from high!
Jehovah's voice amid the storm
I heard—methinks I see his form,

As riding on the clouds of even,
He spreads his glory o'er the heaven.'"

This, likewise, her mother made her write down at the instant; thus giving additional impulse to this growing inclination.

I shall select one more instance of this early facility at numbers, especially as it involves a case of conscience, creditable to her early powers of self-examination. She had been reproved by her mother for some trifling act of disobedience, but aggravated her fault by attempting to justify it; she was, therefore, banished to her bedroom until she should become sensible of her error. Two hours elapsed without her evincing any disposition to yield; on the contrary, she persisted in vindicating her conduct, and accused her mother of injustice.

Mrs. Davidson mildly reasoned with her; entreated her to examine the spirit by which she was actuated; placed before her the example of our Saviour in submitting to the will of his parents; and, exhorting her to pray to God to assist her, and to give her meekness and humility, left her again to her reflections.

"An hour or two afterwards," says Mrs. Davidson, "she desired I would admit her. I sent word that, when she was in a proper frame of mind, I would be glad to see her. The little creature came in, bathed in tears, threw

her arms round my neck, and sobbing violently, put into my hands the following verses:

" 'Forgiven by my Saviour dear,
For all the wrongs I've done,
What other wish could I have here?
Alas there yet is one.

I know my God has pardoned me,
I know he loves me still;
I wish forgiven I may be
By her I've used so ill.

Good resolutions I have made,
And thought I loved my Lord:
But ah! I trusted in myself,
And broke my foolish word.

But give me strength, oh Lord! to trust
For help alone in thee;
Thou knowest my inmost feelings best,
Oh teach me to obey.' "

We have spoken of the buoyancy of Margaret's feelings, and the vivid pleasure she received from external objects; she entered, however, but little into the amusements of the few children with whom she associated, nor did she take much delight in their society; she was conscious of a difference between them and herself, but scarce knew in what it con-

sisted. Their sports seemed to divert for a while, but soon wearied her, and she would fly to a book, or seek the conversation of persons of maturer age and mind. Her highest pleasures were intellectual. She seemed to live in a world of her own creation, surrounded by the images of her own fancy. Her own childish amusements had originality and freshness, and called into action the mental powers, so as to render them interesting to persons of all ages. If at play with her little dog or kitten, she would carry on imaginary dialogues between them; always ingenious, and sometimes even brilliant. If her doll happened to be the plaything of the moment, it was invested with a character exhibiting knowledge of history, and all the powers of memory which a child can be supposed to exercise. Whether it was Mary Queen of Scots, or her rival, Elizabeth, or the simple cottage maiden, each character was maintained with propriety. In telling stories (an amusement all children are fond of) hers were always original, and of a kind calculated to elevate the minds of the children present, giving them exalted views of truth, honor, and integrity; and the sacrifice of all selfish feelings to the happiness of others was illustrated in the heroine of her story.

This talent for extemporaneous story-telling

increased with exercise, until she would carry on a narrative for hours together: and in nothing was the precocity of her inventive powers more apparent than in the discrimination and individuality of her fictitious characters, the consistency with which they were sustained, the graphic force of her descriptions, the elevation of her sentiments, and the poetic beauty of her imagery.

This early gift caused her to be sought by some of the neighbors, who would lead her unconsciously into an exertion of her powers. Nothing was done by her from vanity or a disposition to "show off," but she would become excited by their attention and the pleasure they seemed to derive from her narrations. When thus excited, a whole evening would be occupied by one of her stories; and when the servant came to take her home, she would observe, in the phraseology of the magazines, "the story to be continued in our next."

Between the age of six and seven she entered upon a course of English grammar, geography, history, and rhetoric, still under the direction and superintendence of her mother; but such was her ardor and application, that it was necessary to keep her in check, lest a too intense pursuit of knowledge should impair her delicate constitution. She

was not required to commit her lessons to memory, but to give the substance of them in her own language and to explain their purport; thus she learnt nothing by rote, but everything understandingly, and soon acquired a knowledge of the rudiments of English education. The morning lesson completed, the rest of the day was devoted to recreation; occasionally sporting and gathering wild flowers on the banks of the Saranac; though the extreme delicacy of her constitution prevented her taking as much exercise as her mother could have wished.

In 1830 an English gentleman, who had been strongly interested and affected by the perusal of the biography and writings of Lucretia Davidson, visited Plattsburgh, in the course of a journey from Quebec to New York, to see the place where she was born and had been buried. While there, he sought an interview with Mrs. Davidson, and his appearance and deportment were such as at once to inspire respect and confidence. He had much to ask about the object of his literary pilgrimage, but his inquiries were managed with the most considerate delicacy. While he was thus conversing with Mrs. Davidson, the little Margaret, then about seven years of age, came tripping into the room, with a book in one hand and a

pencil in the other. He was charmed with her bright, intellectual countenance, but still more with finding that the volume in her hand was a copy of Thomson's "Seasons," in which she had been marking with a pencil the passages which most pleased her. He drew her to him; his frank, winning manner soon banished her timidity; he engaged her in conversation, and found, to his astonishment, a counterpart of Lucretia Davidson before him. His visit was necessarily brief; but his manners, appearance, and conversation, and, above all, the extraordinary interest with which he had regarded her, sank deep in the affectionate heart of the child, and inspired a friendship that remained one of her strongest attachments through the residue of her transient existence.

The delicate state of her health this summer rendered it advisable to take her to the Saratoga Springs, the waters of which appeared to have a beneficial effect. After remaining here some time, she accompanied her parents to New York. It was her first visit to the city, and of course fruitful of wonder and excitement; a new world seemed to open before her; new scenes, new friends, new occupations, new sources of instruction and enjoyment; her young heart was overflowing, and her head giddy with delight. To complete

her happiness, she again met with her English friend, whom she greeted with as much eagerness and joy as if he had been a companion of her own age. He manifested the same interest in her that he had shown at Plattsburgh, and took great pleasure in accompanying her to many of the exhibitions and places of intellectual gratification of the metropolis, and marking their effects upon her fresh, unhackneyed feelings and intelligent mind. In company with him she, for the first and only time in her life, visited the theatre. It was a scene of magic to her, or rather, as she said, like a "brilliant dream." She often recurred to it with vivid recollection, and the effect of it upon her imagination was subsequently apparent in the dramatic nature of some of her writings.

One of her greatest subjects of regret on leaving New York was the parting with her intellectual English friend; but she was consoled by his promising to pay Plattsburgh another visit, and to pass a few days there previous to his departure for England. Soon after returning to Plattsburgh, however, Mrs. Davidson received a letter from him saying that he was unexpectedly summoned home, and would have to defer his promised visit until his return to the United States.

It was a severe disappointment to Margaret, who had conceived for him an enthusiastic friendship remarkable in such a child. His letter was accompanied by presents of books and various tasteful remembrances, but the sight of them only augmented her affliction. She wrapped them all carefully in paper, and treasured them up in a particular drawer, where they were daily visited, and many a tear shed over them.

The excursions to Saratoga and New York had improved her health and given a fresh impulse to her mind. She resumed her studies with great eagerness; her spirits rose with mental exercise; she soon was in one of her veins of intellectual excitement. She read, she wrote, she danced, she sang, and was for the time the happiest of the happy. In the freshness of early morning, and towards sunset, when the heat of the day was over, she would stroll on the banks of the Saranac, following its course to where it pours itself into the beautiful Bay of Cumberland in Lake Champlain. There the rich variety of scenery which bursts upon the eye; the islands, scattered like so many gems on the broad bosom of the lake; the green mountains of Vermont beyond, clothed in the atmospherical charms of our magnificent climate—all these would

inspire a degree of poetic rapture in her mind, mingled with a sacred melancholy; for these were scenes which had often awakened the enthusiasm of her deceased sister Lucretia.

Her mother, in her memoranda, gives a picture of her in one of these excited moods.

"After an evening's stroll along the river bank, we seated ourselves by a window to observe the effect of the full moon rising over the waters. A holy calm seemed to pervade all nature. With her head resting on my bosom, and her eyes fixed on the firmament, she pointed to a particularly bright star, and said:

"'Behold that bright and sparkling star
Which setteth as a queen afar:
Over the blue and spangled heaven
It sheds its glory in the even!

Our Jesus made that sparkling star
Which shines and twinkles from afar.
Oh! 't was that bright and glorious gem
Which shone o'er ancient Bethlehem!'

"The summer passed swiftly away," continues her mother, "yet her intellectual advances seemed to outstrip the wings of time. As the autumn approached, however, I could plainly perceive that her health was again declining. The chilly winds from the lake were too keen for her weak lungs. My own health,

too, was failing; it was determined, therefore, that we should pass the winter with my eldest daughter, Mrs. T——, who resided in Canada, in the same latitude, it is true, but in an inland situation. This arrangement was very gratifying to Margaret; and, had my health improved by the change, as her own did, she would have been perfectly happy. During this period she attended to a regular course of study, under my direction; for, though confined wholly to my bed, and suffering extremely from pain and debility, Heaven, in mercy, preserved my mental faculties from the wreck that disease had made of my physical powers." The same plan as heretofore was pursued. Nothing was learned by rote, and the lessons were varied to prevent fatigue and distaste, though study was always with her a pleasing duty rather than an arduous task. After she had studied her lessons by herself she would discuss them in conversation with her mother. Her reading was under the same guidance. "I selected her books," says Mrs. Davidson, "with much care, and to my surprise found that, notwithstanding her poetical temperament, she had a high relish for history, and that she would read with as much apparent interest an abstruse treatise that called forth the reflecting powers, as she did poetry or

works of the imagination. In polite literature Addison was her favorite author, but Shakspeare she dwelt upon with enthusiasm. She was restricted, however, to certain marked portions of this inimitable writer; and having been told that it was not proper for her to read the whole, such was her innate delicacy and her sense of duty, that she never overstepped the prescribed boundaries."

In the intervals of study she amused herself with drawing, for which she had a natural talent, and soon began to sketch with considerable skill. As her health had improved since her removal to Canada, she frequently partook of the favorite winter recreation of a drive in a traineau, or sleigh, in company with her sister and her brother-in-law, and completely enveloped in furs and buffalo-robes; and nothing put her in a finer flow of spirits than thus skimming along, in bright January weather, on the sparkling snow, to the merry music of the jingling sleigh-bells. The winter passed away without any improvement in the health of Mrs. Davidson; indeed she continued a helpless invalid, confined to her bed, for eighteen months; during all which time little Margaret was her almost constant companion and attendant.

"Her tender solicitude," writes Mrs. David-

son, "endeared her to me beyond any other earthly thing; although under the roof of a beloved and affectionate daughter, and having constantly with me an experienced and judicious nurse, yet the soft and gentle voice of my little darling was more than medicine to my worn-out frame. If her delicate hand smoothed my pillow, it was soft to my aching temples, and her sweet smile would cheer me in the lowest depths of despondency. She would draw for me—read to me; and often, when writing at her little table, would surprise me by some tribute of love, which never failed to operate as a cordial to my heart. At a time when my life was despaired of, she wrote the following lines while sitting at my bed:

"'I'll to thy arms in rapture fly,
And wipe the tear that dims thine eye;
Thy pleasure will be my delight,
Till thy pure spirit takes its flight.

When left alone—when thou art gone,
Yet still I will not feel alone:
Thy spirit still will hover near,
And guard thy orphan daughter dear!'"

In this trying moment, when Mrs. Davidson herself had given up all hope of recovery, one of the most touching sights was to see this affectionate and sensitive child tasking herself

to achieve a likeness of her mother, that it might remain with her as a memento. "How often would she sit by my bed," says Mrs. Davidson, "striving to sketch features that had been vainly attempted by more than one finished artist; and when she found that she had failed, and that the likeness could not be recognized, she would put her arms around my neck and weep, and say, 'Oh, dear mamma, I shall lose you, and not even a sketch of your features will be left me! and if I live to be a woman, perhaps I shall even forget how you looked!' This idea gave her great distress, sweet lamb! I then little thought this bosom would have been her dying pillow!"

After being reduced to the very verge of the grave, Mrs. Davidson began slowly to recover; but a long time elapsed before she was restored to her usual degree of health. Margaret in the meantime increased in strength and stature; she looked fragile and delicate, but she was always cheerful and buoyant. To relieve the monotony of her life, which had been passed too much in a sick chamber, and to preserve her spirits fresh and elastic, little excursions were devised for her about the country, to Missisque Bay, St. Johns, Alburgh, Champlain, etc. The following lines, addressed to her mother on one of these occasional separa-

tions, will serve as a specimen of her compositions in this the eighth year of her age, and of the affectionate current of her feelings:

"Farewell, dear mother; for a while
I must resign thy plaintive smile;
May angels watch thy couch of woe,
And joys unceasing round thee flow.

May the Almighty Father spread
His sheltering wings above thy head;
It is not long that we must part,
Then cheer thy downcast, drooping heart.

Remember, oh, remember me,
Unceasing is my love for thee;
When death shall sever earthly ties,
When thy loved form all senseless lies,

Oh that my soul with thine could flee,
And roam through wide eternity;
Could tread with thee the courts of heaven,
And count the brilliant stars of even!

Farewell, dear mother; for a while
I must resign thy plaintive smile;
May angels watch thy couch of woe,
And joys unceasing round thee flow."

In the month of January, 1833, while still in Canada, she was brought very low by an attack of scarlet fever, under which she lingered many weeks, but had so far recovered by the

middle of April as to take the air in a carriage. Her mother, too, having regained sufficient strength to travel, it was thought advisable, for both their healths, to try the effect of a journey to New York. They accordingly departed about the beginning of May, accompanied by a family party. Of this journey, and a sojourn of several months in New York, she kept a journal, which evinces considerable habits of observation, but still more that kindling of the imagination which, in the poetic mind, gives to commonplace realities the witchery of romance. She was deeply interested by visits to the "School for the Blind," and the "Deaf and Dumb Asylum"; and makes a minute of a visit of a very different nature—to Black Hawk and his fellow-chiefs, prisoners of war, who, by command of government, were taken about through various of our cities, that they might carry back to their brethren in the wilderness a cautionary idea of the overwhelming power of the white man.

"On the 25th June I saw and shook hands with the famous Black Hawk, the Indian chief, the enemy of our nation, who has massacred our patriots, murdered our women and helpless children! Why is he treated with so much attention by those whom he has injured? It cannot surely arise from benevolence. It must

be *policy*. Be what it may, I cannot understand it. His son, the Prophet, and others who accompanied him, interested *me* more than the chief himself. His son is no doubt a fine specimen of Indian beauty. He has a high brow, piercing black eyes, long black hair which hangs down his back, and, upon the whole, is well suited to captivate an Indian maiden. The Prophet we found surveying himself in a looking-glass, undoubtedly wishing to show himself off to the best advantage in the fair assembly before him. The rest were dozing on a sofa, but they were awakened sufficiently to shake hands with us, and others who had the courage to approach so near them. I remember I dreamed of them the following night."

During this visit to New York, she was the life and delight of the relatives with whom she resided, and they still retain a lively recollection of the intellectual nature of her sports among her youthful companions, and of the surprising aptness and fertile invention displayed by her in contriving new sources of amusement. She had a number of playmates, nearly of her own age, and one of her projects was to get up a dramatic entertainment for the gratification of themselves and their friends. The proposal was readily agreed to, provided

she would write the play. This she readily undertook, and indeed devised and directed the whole arrangements, though she had never been but once to a theatre, and that on her previous visit to New York. Her little companions were now all busily employed, under her directions, preparing dresses and equipments; robes with trains were fitted out for the female characters, and quantities of paper and tinsel were consumed in making caps, helmets, spears, and sandals.

After four or five days had been spent in these preparations, Margaret was called upon to produce the play. "Oh!" she replied, "I have not written it yet."—"But how is this! —Do you make the dresses first, and then write the play to suit them?"—"Oh!" replied she, gayly, "the writing of the play is the easiest part of the preparation; it will be ready before the dresses." And, in fact, in two days she produced her drama, *The Tragedy of Alethia*. It was not very voluminous, to be sure, but it contained within it sufficient of high character and astounding and bloody incident to furnish out a drama of five times its size. A king and queen of England resolutely bent upon marrying their daughter, the Princess Alethia, to the Duke of Ormond. The princess most perversely and dolorously in love

with a mysterious cavalier, who figures at her father's court under the name of Sir Percy Lennox, but who, in private truth, is the Spanish king, Rodrigo, thus obliged to maintain an incognito on account of certain hostilities between Spain and England. The odious nuptials of the princess with the Duke of Ormond proceed : she is led, a submissive victim, to the altar ; is on the point of pledging her irrevocable word ; when the priest throws off his sacred robe, discovers himself to be Rodrigo, and plunges a dagger into the bosom of the king. Alethia instantly plucks the dagger from her father's bosom, throws herself into Rodrigo's arms, and kills herself. Rodrigo flies to a cavern, renounces England, Spain, and his royal throne, and devotes himself to eternal remorse. The queen ends the play by a passionate apostrophe to the spirit of her daughter, and sinks dead on the floor.

The little drama lies before us, a curious specimen of the prompt talent of this most ingenious child, and by no means more incongruous in its incidents than many current dramas by veteran and experienced playwrights.

The parts were now distributed and soon learnt ; Margaret drew out a play-bill, in theatrical style, containing a list of the dramatis

personæ, and issued regular tickets of admission. The piece went off with universal applause; Margaret figuring, in a long train, as the princess, and killing herself in a style that would not have disgraced an experienced stage heroine.

In these, and similar amusements, her time passed happily in New York, for it was the study of the intelligent and amiable relatives with whom she sojourned, to render her residence among them as agreeable and profitable as possible. Her visit, however, was protracted much beyond what was originally intended. As the summer advanced, the heat and restraint of the city became oppressive; her heart yearned after her native home on the Saranac; and the following lines, written at the time, express the state of her feelings:

HOME.

I would fly from the city, would fly from its care,
To my own native plants and my flowerets so fair;
To the cool grassy shade, and the rivulet bright,
Which reflects the pale moon on its bosom of light.
Again would I view the old mansion so dear,
Where I sported a babe, without sorrow or fear;
I would leave this great city so brilliant and gay,
For a peep at my home on this fine summer day.
I have friends whom I love and would leave with
regret,

But the love of my home, oh, 't is tenderer yet!
There a sister reposes unconscious in death—
'T was there she first drew and there yielded her breath—
A father I love is away from me now—
Oh could I but print a sweet kiss on his brow,
Or smooth the grey locks, to my fond heart so dear,
How quickly would vanish each trace of a tear!
Attentive I listen to pleasure's gay call,
But my own darling home, it is dearer than all.

At length, late in the month of October, the travellers turned their faces homewards; but it was not the "darling home" for which Margaret had been longing, her native cottage on the beautiful banks of the Saranac. The wintry winds from Lake Champlain had been pronounced too severe for her constitution, and the family residence had been reluctantly changed to the village of Ballston. Margaret felt this change most deeply. We have already shown the tender as well as poetical associations that linked her heart to the beautiful home of her childhood; a presentiment seemed to come over her mind that she would never see it more; a presentiment unfortunately prophetic. She was now accustomed to give prompt utterance to her emotions in rhyme, and the following lines, written at the time, remain a touching record of her feelings:

her own family, and reunited to her two youngest brothers, from whom she had long been separated. A thousand little plans were devised by her, and some few of them put in execution, for their mutual pleasure and improvement. One of the most characteristic of these was a "weekly paper," issued by her in manuscript, and entitled *The Juvenile Aspirant.* All their domestic occupations and amusements were of an intellectual kind. Their mornings were spent in study; the evenings enlivened by conversation, or by the work of some favorite author, read aloud for the benefit of the family circle.

As the powers of this excitable and imaginative little being developed themselves, Mrs. Davidson felt more and more conscious of the responsibility of undertaking to cultivate and direct them; yet to whom could she confide her that would so well understand her character and constitution? To place her in a boarding-school would subject her to increased excitement, caused by emulation, and her mind was already too excitable for her fragile frame. Her peculiar temperament required peculiar culture; it must neither be stimulated nor checked; and while her imagination was left to its free soarings, care must be taken to strengthen her judgment, improve her mind,

establish her principles, and inculcate habits of self-examination and self-control. All this, it was thought, might best be accomplished under a mother's eye; it was resolved, therefore, that her education should, as before, be conducted entirely at home. "Thus she continued," to use her mother's words, "to live in the bosom of affection, where every thought and feeling was reciprocated. I strove to draw out the powers of her mind by conversation and familiar remarks upon subjects of daily study and reflection, and taught her the necessity of bringing all her thoughts, desires, and feelings under the dominion of reason; to understand the importance of self-control, when she found her inclinations were at war with its dictates. To fulfil all her duties from a conviction of right, because they were duties; and to find her happiness in the consciousness of her own integrity, and the approbation of God. How delightful was the task of instructing a mind like hers! She seized with avidity upon every new idea, for the instruction proceeded from lips of love. Often would she exclaim, 'Oh mamma! how glad I am that you are not too ill to teach me! Surely I am the happiest girl in the world!' She had read much for a child of little more than ten years of age. She was well versed in both ancient

and modern history (that is to say, in the courses generally prescribed for the use of schools), Blair, Kames, and Paley had formed part of her studies. She was familiar with most of the British poets. Her command of the English language was remarkable, both in conversation and writing. She had learned the rudiments of French and was anxious to become perfect in the language; but I had so neglected my duty in this respect after I left school, that I was not qualified to instruct her. A friend, however, who understood French, called occasionally and gave her lessons for his own amusement; she soon translated well, and such was her talent for the acquisition of languages, and such her desire to read everything in the original, that every obstacle vanished before her perseverance. She made some advances in Latin, also, in company with her brother, who was attended by a private teacher; and they were engaged upon the early books of Virgil, when her health again gave way, and she was confined to her room by severe illness. These frequent attacks upon a frame so delicate awakened all our fears. Her illness spread a gloom throughout our habitation, for fears were entertained that it would end in a pulmonary consumption." After a confinement of two months, however, she regained

her usual, though at all times fragile, state of health. In the following spring, when she had just entered upon the eleventh year of her age, intelligence arrived of the death of her sister, Mrs. T., who had been resident in Canada. The blow had been apprehended from previous accounts of her extreme illness, but it was a severe shock. She had looked up to this sister as to a second mother, and as to one who, from the precarious health of her natural parent, might be called upon to fulfil that tender office. She was one, also, calculated to inspire affection; lovely in person, refined and intelligent in mind, still young in years; and with all this, her only remaining sister! In the following lines, poured out in the fulness of her grief, she touchingly alludes to the previous loss of her sister Lucretia, so often the subject of her poetic regrets, and of the consolation she had always felt in still having a sister to love and cherish her.

ON THE DEATH OF MY SISTER ANNA ELIZA.

While weeping o'er our sister's tomb,
And heaving many a heartfelt sigh,
And while in youth's bewitching bloom,
I thought not that thou too couldst die.

When gazing on that little mound,
Spread o'er with turf, and flowers, and mould,

I thought not that thy lovely form
Could be as motionless and cold.

When her light, airy form was lost
To fond affection's weeping eye;
I thought not we should mourn for thee,
I thought not that thou too couldst die.

Yes, sparkling gem! when thou wert here,
From death's encircling mantle free,
Our mourning parents wiped each tear,
And cried, "Why weep? we still have thee."

Each tender thought on thee they turn'd;
Each hope of joy to thee was given;
And, dwelling on each matchless charm,
They half forgot the saint in heaven.

But thou art gone, forever gone!
Sweet wanderer in a world of woe!
Now, unrestrain'd our grief must pour!
Uncheck'd our mourning tears must flow.

How oft I 've press'd my glowing lip
In rapture to thy snowy brow,
And gazed upon that angel eye,
Closed in death's chilling slumber now.

While tottering on the verge of life,
Thine every nerve with pain unstrung,
That beaming eye was raised to heaven,—
That heart to God for safety clung.

And when the awful moment came,
Replete with trembling hope and fear,

Though anguish shook thy slender frame,
  Thy thoughts were in a brighter sphere.

The wreath of light, which round thee play'd,
  Bore thy pure spirit to the skies;
With thee we lost our brightest gem,
  But heaven has gain'd a glorious prize.

Oh may the bud of promise left,
  Follow the brilliant path she trod,
And of her fostering care bereft,
  Still seek and find his mother's God.

But he, the partner of her life,
  Who shared her joy and soothed her woe,
How can I heal his broken heart?
  How bid his sorrow cease to flow?

It 's only time those wounds can heal;
  Time, from whose piercing pangs alone
The poignancy of grief can steal,
  And hush the heart's convulsive moan.

To parry the effect of this most afflicting blow, Margaret was sent on a visit to New York, where she passed a couple of months in the society of affectionate and intelligent friends, and returned home in June, recruited in health and spirits. The sight of her mother, however, though habituated to sorrow and suffering, yet bowed down by her recent bereavement, called forth her tenderest sympathies; and we consider it as illustrating the progress of the in-

tellect and the history of the heart of this most interesting child, to insert another effusion called forth by this domestic calamity:

TO MY MOTHER OPPRESSED WITH SORROW.

Weep, oh my mother! I will bid thee weep!
For grief like thine requires the aid of tears;
But oh, I would not see thy bosom thus
Bow'd down to earth, with anguish so severe!
I would not see thine ardent feelings crush'd,
Deaden'd to all save sorrow's thrilling tone,
Like the pale flower, which hangs its drooping head
Beneath the chilling blasts of stern Æolus!
Oh I have seen that brow with pleasure flush'd,
The lightening smile around it brightly playing,
And the dark eyelids trembling with delight—
But now how chang'd—thy downcast eye is bent,
With heavy, thoughtful glances, on the ground,
And oh, how quickly starts the tear-drop there!
It is not age which dims its wonted fire,
Or plants his lilies on thy pallid cheek,
But sorrow, keenest, darkest, biting sorrow!
When love would seek to lead thy heart from grief,
And fondly pleads one cheering look to view,
A sad, a faint sad smile one instant gleams
Athwart the brow where sorrow sits enshrined,
Brooding o'er ruins of what once was fair;
But like departing sunset, as it throws
One farewell shadow o'er the sleeping earth
(So soon in sombre twilight to be wrapt),
Thus, thus it fades! and sorrow more profound
Dwells on each feature where a smile, so cold
It scarcely might be called the mockery

Of cheerful peace, but just before had been.
Long years of suffering, brighten'd not by joy,
Death and disease, fell harbingers of woe,
Must leave their impress on the human face,
And dim the fire of youth, the glow of pride;
But oh, my mother! mourn not thus for *her*,
The rose, just blown, transplanted to its home,
Nor weep that her angelic soul has found
A resting-place with God.
Oh let the eye of heaven-born faith disperse
The dark'ning mists of earthly grief, and pierce
The clouds which shadow dull mortality!
Gaze on the heaven of glory crown'd with light,
Where rests thine own sweet child with radiant brow,
In the same voice which charm'd her father's halls,
Chanting sweet anthems to her Maker's praise;
And watching with delight the gentle buds
Which she had lived to mourn; watching thine own,
My mother! the soft unfolding blossoms,
Which, ere the breath of earthly sin could taint,
Departed to their Saviour; there to wait
For thy fond spirit in the home of bliss!
The angel babes have found a second mother;
But when thy soul shall pass from earth away,
The little cherubs then shall cling to thee,
And their sweet guardian welcome thee with joy,
Protector of their helpless infancy,
Who taught them how to reach that happy home.
Oh think of this, and let one heartfelt smile
Illume the face so long estranged from joy;
But may it rest not on thy brow alone,
But shed a cheering influence o'er thy heart,
Too sweet to be forgotten! Though thy loved
And beautiful are fled from earth away,

Still there are those who love thee—who would live
With thee alone—who weep or smile with thee.
Think of thy noble sons, and think of her
Who prays thee to be happy in the hope
Of meeting those in heaven who loved thee here,
And training those on earth, that they may live
A band of saints with thee in Paradise.

The regular studies of Margaret were now resumed, and her mother found, in attending to her instruction, a relief from the poignancy of her afflictions. Margaret always enjoyed the country, and in fine weather indulged in long rambles in the woods, accompanied by some friend, or attended by a faithful servant-woman. When in the house, the versatility of her talents, her constitutional vivacity, and an aptness at coining occupation and amusement out of the most trifling incident, perpetually relieved the monotony of domestic life; while the faint gleam of health that occasionally flitted across her cheek, beguiled the anxious forebodings that had been indulged concerning her. "A strong hope was rising in my heart," says her mother, "that our frail, delicate blossom would continue to flourish, and that it was possible I might live to behold the perfection of its beauty! Alas! how uncertain is every earthly prospect! Even then the canker was concealed with the

bright bud, which was eventually to destroy its loveliness! About the last of December she was again seized with a liver complaint, which, by sympathy, affected her lungs, and again awakened all our fears. She was confined to her bed, and it was not until March that she was able to sit up and walk about her room. The confinement then became irksome, but her kind and skilful physician had declared that she must not be permitted to venture out until mild weather in April." During this fit of illness her mind had remained in an unusual state of inactivity; but with the opening of spring and the faint return of health, it broke forth with a brilliancy and a restless excitability that astonished and alarmed. "In conversation," says her mother, "her sallies of wit were dazzling. She composed and wrote incessantly, or rather would have done so, had I not interposed my authority to prevent this unceasing tax upon both her mental and physical strength. Fugitive pieces were produced every day, such as 'The Shunamite,' 'Belshazzar's Feast,' 'The Nature of Mind,' 'Boabdil el Chico,' etc. She seemed to exist only in the regions of poetry." We cannot help thinking that these moments of intense poetical exaltation sometimes approached to delirium, for we are told by her mother that

"the image of her departed sister Lucretia mingled in all her aspirations; the holy elevation of Lucretia's character had taken deep hold of her imagination, and in her moments of enthusiasm she felt that she held close and intimate communion with her beatified spirit."

This intense mental excitement continued after she was permitted to leave her room, and her application to her books and papers was so eager and almost impassioned, that it was found expedient again to send her on an excursion. A visit to some relatives, and a sojourn among the beautiful scenery of the Mohawk River, had a salutary effect; but on returning home she was again attacked with alarming indisposition, which confined her to her bed.

"The struggle between nature and disease," says her mother, "was for a time doubtful; she was, however, at length restored to us. With returning health, her mental labors were resumed. I reasoned and entreated, but at last became convinced that my only way was to let matters take their course. If restrained in her favorite pursuits, she was unhappy. To acquire useful knowledge was a motive sufficient to induce her to surmount all obstacles. I could only select for her a course of calm and quiet reading, which, while it furnished real

food for the mind, would compose rather than excite the imagination. She read much and wrote a great deal. As for myself, I lived in a state of constant anxiety lest these labors should prematurely destroy this delicate bud."

In the autumn of 1835, Dr. Davidson made arrangements to remove his family to a rural residence near New York, pleasantly situated on the banks of the Sound, or East River, as it is commonly called. The following extract of a letter from Margaret to Moss Kent, Esq.,*

* This gentleman was an early and valued friend of the Davidson family, and is honorably mentioned by Mr. Morse for the interest he took in the education of Lucretia. The notice of Mr. Morse, however, leaves it to be supposed that Mr. Kent's acquaintance with Dr. and Mrs. Davidson was brought about by his admiration of their daughter's talents, and commenced with overtures for her instruction. The following extract of a letter from Mrs. Davidson will place this matter in a proper light, and show that these offers on the part of Mr. Kent, and the partial acceptance of them by Dr. and Mrs. Davidson, were warranted by the terms of intimacy which before existed between them. "I had the pleasure," says Mrs. Davidson, "to know Mr. Kent before my marriage, after which he frequently called at our house when visiting his sister, with whom I was on terms of intimacy. On one of these occasions he saw Lucretia. He had often seen her when a child, but she had changed much. Her uncommon personal beauty, graceful

The Old Shot Tower, East River,
New York, 1831.

Redrawn from an old print.

thing around it transports the mind to days long gone by, and my imagination is constantly upon the rack to burden the past with scenes transacted on this very spot. In the rear of the mansion a lawn, spangled with beautiful flowers, and shaded by spreading trees, slopes gently down to the river side, where vessels of every description are constantly spreading their white sails to the wind. In front, a long shady avenue leads to the door, and a large extent of beautiful undulating ground is spread with fruit-trees of every description. In and about the house there are so many little nooks and by-places, that sometimes I fancy it has been the resort of smugglers; and who knows but I shall yet find their hidden treasures somewhere? Do come and see us, my dear uncle; but you must come soon if you would enjoy any of the beauties of the place. The trees have already doffed their robe of green, and assumed the red and yellow of autumn, and the paths are strewed with fallen leaves. But there is loveliness even in the decay of nature. But do, do come soon, or the branches will be leafless, and the cold winds will prevent the pleasant rambles we now enjoy. Dear mother has twice accompanied me a short distance about the grounds, and indeed I think her health has improved since we removed to

New York, though she is still very feeble. Her mind is much relieved, having her little family gathered once more around her. You well know how great an effect her spirits have upon her health. Oh ! if my dear mother is only in comfortable health, and you will come, I think I shall spend a delightful winter prosecuting my studies at home."

"For a short time," writes Mrs. Davidson, "she seemed to luxuriate upon the beauties of this lovely place. She selected her own room, and adjusted all her little tasteful ornaments. Her books and drawing implements were transported to this chosen spot. Still she hovered around me like my shadow. Mother's room was still her resting-place, mother's bosom her sanctuary. She sketched a plan for one or two poems which were never finished. But her enjoyment was soon interrupted. She was again attacked by her old enemy, and though her confinement to her room was of short duration, she did not get rid of the cough. A change now came over her mind. Hitherto she had always delighted in serious conversation on heaven ; the pure and elevated occupations of saints and angels in a future state had proved a delightful source of contemplation ; and she would become so

animated that it seemed sometimes as if she would fly to realize her hopes and joys! Now her young heart appeared to cling to life and its enjoyments, and more closely than I had ever known it. 'She was never ill.'—When asked the question, 'Margaret, how are you?' 'Well, quite well,' was her reply, when it was obvious to me, who watched her every look, that she had scarcely strength to sustain her weak frame. She saw herself the last daughter of her idolizing parents—the only sister of her devoted brothers! Life had acquired new charms, though she had always been a happy, light-hearted child."

The following lines, written about this time, show the elasticity of her spirit and the bounding vivacity of her imagination, that seemed to escape, as in a dream, from the frail tenement of clay in which they were encased:

STANZAS.

Oh, for the pinions of a bird,
To bear me far away,
Where songs of other lands are heard,
And other waters play!

For some aërial car, to fly
On through the realms of light,
To regions rife with poesy,
And teeming with delight.

O'er many a wild and classic stream
In ecstasy I 'd bend,
And hail each ivy-covered tower
As though it were a friend.

O'er piles where many a wintry blast
Is swept in mournful tones,
And fraught with scenes long glided past,
It shrieks, and sighs, and moans.

Through many a shadowy grove, and round
Full many a cloister'd hall,
And corridors, where every step
With echoing peal doth fall.

Enchanted with the dreariness,
And awe-struck with the gloom,
I would wander, like a spectre,
'Mid the regions of the tomb.

And Memory her enchanting veil
Around my soul should twine ;
And Superstition, wildly pale,
Should woo me to her shrine ;

I 'd cherish still her witching gloom,
Half shrinking in my dread,
But, powerless to dissolve the spell,
Pursue her fearful tread.

Oh, what unmingling pleasure then
My youthful heart would feel,
As o'er its thrilling chords each thought
Of former days would steal,—

Of centuries in oblivion wrapt,
  Of forms which long were cold,
And all of terror, all of woe,
  That history's page has told.

How fondly in my bosom
  Would its monarch, Fancy, reign,
And spurn earth's meaner offices
  With glorious disdain.

Amid the scenes of past delight,
  Or misery, I 'd roam :
Where ruthless tyrants swayed in might,—
  Where princes found a home ;

Where heroes have enwreathed their brows
  With chivalric renown ;
Where Beauty's hand, as Valor's meed,
  Hath twined the laurel crown.

I 'd stand where proudest kings have stood,
  Or kneel where slaves have knelt,
Till wrapt in magic solitude,
  I feel what they have felt.

Oh, for the pinions of a bird,
  To waft me far away,
Where songs of other lands are heard
  And other waters play !

About this time Mrs. Davidson received a letter from the English gentleman for whom Margaret, when quite a child, had conceived

such a friendship, her dear elder brother, as she used to call him. The letter bore testimony to his undiminished regard. He was in good health; married to a very estimable and lovely woman; was the father of a fine little girl, and was at Havana with his family, where he kindly entreated Mrs. Davidson and Margaret to join them, being sure that a winter passed in that mild climate would have the happiest effect upon their healths. His doors, his heart, he added, were open to receive them, and his amiable consort impatient to bid them welcome. "Margaret," says Mrs. Davidson, "was overcome by the perusal of this letter. She laughed and wept alternately. One moment urged me to go; 'she was herself well, but she was sure it would cure me'; the next moment felt as though she could not leave the friends to whom she had so recently been reunited. Oh, had I gone at that time, perhaps my child might still have lived to bless me!"

During the first weeks of Margaret's residence at Ruremont, the character and situation of the place seized powerfully upon her imagination. "The curious structure of this old-fashioned house," says Mrs. Davidson, "its picturesque appearance, the varied and beautiful grounds which surrounded it, called up a thousand poetic images and romantic ideas.

A long gallery, a winding staircase, a dark, narrow passage, a trap-door, large apartments, with massive doors and heavy iron bars and bolts, all set her mind teeming with recollections of what she had read and imagined of old castles, banditti, smugglers, etc. She roamed over the place in perfect ecstasy, peopling every part with images of her own imagination, and fancying it the scene of some foregone event of dark and thrilling interest." There was, in fact, some palpable material for all this spinning and weaving of the fancy. The writer of this memoir visited Ruremont at the time it was occupied by the Davidson family. It was a spacious, and somewhat crazy and poetical-looking mansion, with large waste apartments. The grounds were rather wild and overgrown, but so much the more picturesque. It stood on the banks of the Sound, the waters of which rushed, with whirling and impetuous tides, below, hurrying on to the dangerous strait of Hell Gate. Nor was this neighborhood without its legendary tales. These wild and lonely shores had, in former times, been the resort of smugglers and pirates. Hard by this very place stood the country retreat of Ready Money Prevost, of dubious and smuggling memory, with his haunted tomb, in which he was said to conceal

his contraband riches; and scarce a secret spot about these shores but had some tradition connected with it of Kidd the pirate and his buried treasures. All these circumstances were enough to breed thick-coming fancies in so imaginative a brain, and the result was a drama in six acts, entitled *The Smuggler*, the scene of which was laid at Ruremont in the old time of the Province. The play was written with great rapidity, and, considering she was little more than twelve years of age, and had never visited a theatre but once in her life, evinced great aptness and dramatic talent. It was to form a domestic entertainment for Christmas holidays; the spacious back-parlor was to be fitted up for the theatre. In planning and making arrangements for the performance, she seemed perfectly happy, and her step resumed its wonted elasticity, though her anxious mother often detected a suppressed cough and remarked a hectic flush upon her cheek. "We now found," says Mrs. Davidson, "that private teachers were not to be procured at Ruremont, and I feared to have her enter upon a course of study which had been talked of before we came to this place. I thought she was too feeble for close mental application, while *she* was striving, by the energies of her mind and bodily exertion

(which only increased the morbid excitement of her system), to overcome disease that she feared was about to fasten itself upon her. She was the more anxious, therefore, to enter upon her studies; and when she saw solicitude in my countenance and manner, she would fix her sweet sad eyes upon my face, as if she would read my very soul, yet dreaded to know what she might find written there. I knew and could understand her feelings; she also understood mine; and there seemed to be a tacit compact between us that this subject, at *present*, was forbidden ground. Her father and brothers were lulled into security by her cheerful manner and constant assertion that she was well, and considered her cough the effect of recent cold. My opinion to the contrary was regarded as the result of extreme maternal anxiety."

She accordingly went to town three times a week, to take lessons in French, music, and dancing. Her progress in French was rapid, and the correctness and elegance of her translations surprised her teachers. Her friends in the city, seeing her look so well and appear so sprightly, encouraged her to believe that air and exercise would prove more beneficial than confinement to the house. She went to town in the morning and returned in the evening in

an open carriage, with her father and one of her elder brothers, each of whom was confined to his respective office until night. In this way she was exposed to the rigors of an unusually cold season; yet she heeded them not, but returned home full of animation to join her little brothers in preparations for their holiday *fête*. Their anticipations of a joyous Christmas were doomed to sad disappointment. As the time approached, two of her brothers were taken ill. One of these, a beautiful boy about nine years of age, had been the favorite companion of her recreations, and she had taken great interest in his mental improvement. "Towards the close of 1835," says her mother, "he began to droop; his cheek grew pale, his step languid, and his bright eye heavy. Instead of rolling the hoop, and bounding across the lawn to meet his sister on her return from the city, he drooped by the side of his feeble mother, and could not bear to be parted from her; at length he was taken to his bed, and, after lingering four months, he died. This was Margaret's first acquaintance with death. She witnessed his gradual decay almost unconsciously, but still persuaded herself 'He will, he must get well!' She saw her sweet little playfellow reclining upon my bosom during his last agonies; she witnessed

the bright glow which flashed upon his long-faded cheek; she beheld the unearthly light of his beautiful eye, as he pressed his dying lips to mine and exclaimed, 'Mother! dear mother! the last hour has come!' Oh! it was indeed an hour of anguish never to be forgotten. Its effect upon her youthful mind was as lasting as her life. The sudden change from life and animation to the still unconsciousness of death, for the time almost paralyzed her. She shed no tear, but stood like a statue upon the scene of death. But when her eldest brother tenderly led her from the room, her tears gushed forth—it was near midnight, and the first thing that aroused her to a sense of what was going on around her, was the thought of my bereavement, and a conviction that it was her province to console me."

We subjoin a record, from her own pen, of her feelings on this lamentable occasion:

ON THE CORPSE OF MY LITTLE BROTHER KENT.

Beauteous form of soulless clay!
Image of what once was life!
Hushed is thy pulse's feeble play,
And ceased the pangs of mortal strife.

Oh! I have heard thy dying groan,
Have seen thy last of earthly pain;

And while I weep that thou art gone,
I cannot wish thee here again.

For ah! the calm and peaceful smile
Upon that clay-cold brow of thine,
Speaks of a spirit freed from sin,—
A spirit joyful and divine.

But thou art gone! and this cold clay
Is all that now remains of thee;
For thy freed soul hath winged its way
To blessèd immortality.

That dying smile, that dying groan,
I never, never can forget,
Till Death's cold hand hath clasped my own,—
His impress on my brow has set.

Those low, and sweet, and plaintive tones,
Which o'er my heart like music swept,
And the deep, deathlike, chilling moans
Which from thy heaving bosom crept.

Oh! thou wert beautiful and fair,
Our loveliest and our dearest one!
No more thy pains or joys we share,
No more—my brother, thou art gone.

Thou 'rt gone! What agony, what woe
In that brief sentence is expressed!
Oh, that the burning tears could flow,
And draw this mountain from my breast!

The anguish of the mother was still more intense, as she saw her bright and beautiful

but perishable offspring thus, one by one, snatched away from her. "My own weak frame," says she, "was unable longer to sustain the effects of long watching and deep grief. I had not only lost my lovely boy, but I felt a strong conviction that I must soon resign my Margaret; or, rather, that she would soon follow me to a premature grave. Although she still persisted in the belief that she was well, the irritating cough, the hectic flush (so often mistaken for the bloom of health), the hurried beating of the heart, and the drenching night-perspirations confirmed me in this belief, and I sank under this accumulated load of affliction. For three weeks I hovered upon the borders of the grave; and when I arose from this bed of pain, so feeble that I could not sustain my own weight, it was to witness the rupture of a blood-vessel in her lungs, caused by exertions to suppress a cough. Oh, it was agony to see her thus! I was compelled to conceal every appearance of alarm, lest the agitation of her mind should produce fatal consequences. As I seated myself by her, she raised her speaking eyes to mine with a mournful, inquiring gaze; and as she read the anguish which I could not conceal, she turned away with a look of despair. She spoke not a word, but silence, still, death-

like silence, pervaded the apartment." The best of medical aid was called in, but the physicians gave no hope; they considered it a deep-seated case of pulmonary consumption. All that could be done was to alleviate the symptoms, and protract life as long as possible, by lessening the excitement of the system. When Mrs. Davidson returned to the bedside, after an interview with the physicians, she was regarded with an anxious, searching look by the lovely little sufferer, but not a question was made. Margaret seemed fearful of receiving a discouraging reply, and "lay, all pale and still (except when agitated by the cough), striving to calm the tumult of her thoughts," while her mother seated herself by her pillow, trembling with weakness and sorrow. Long and anxious were the days and nights spent in watching over her. Every sudden movement or emotion excited the hemorrhage. "Not a murmur escaped her lips," says her mother, "during her protracted sufferings. 'How are you, love? how have you rested during the night?' 'Well, dear mamma; I have slept sweetly.' I have been night after night beside her restless couch, wiped the cold dew from her brow, and kissed her faded cheek in all the agony of grief, while she unconsciously slept on; or if she

did awake, her calm sweet smile, which seemed to emanate from heaven, has, spite of my *reason*, lighted my heart with hope. Except when very ill, she was ever a bright dreamer. Her visions were usually of an unearthly cast,—about heaven and angels. She was wandering among the stars; her sainted sisters were her pioneers; her cherub brother walked hand-in-hand with her through the gardens of Paradise! I was always an early riser; but after Margaret began to decline I never disturbed her until time to rise for breakfast, a season of social intercourse in which she delighted to unite, and from which she was never willing to be absent. Often when I have spoken to her she would exclaim, 'Mother, you have disturbed the brightest visions that ever mortal was blessed with! I was in the midst of such scenes of delight! Cannot I have time to finish my dream?' And when I told her how long it was until breakfast, 'It will do,' she would say, and again lose herself in her bright imaginings; for I considered these as moments of inspiration rather than sleep. She told me it was not sleep. I never knew but one, except Margaret, who enjoyed this delightful and mysterious source of happiness; that one was her departed sister Lucretia.

When awaking from these reveries, an almost ethereal light played about her eye, which seemed to irradiate her whole face. A holy calm pervaded her manner, and in truth she looked more like an angel who had been communing with kindred spirits in the world of light, than anything of a grosser nature."

How truly does this correspond with Milton's exquisite description of the heavenly influences that minister to virgin innocence :

"A thousand liv'ried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turn it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal."

Of the images and speculations that floated in her mind during these half-dreams, half-reveries, we may form an idea from the following lines, written on one occasion after what her mother used to term her "descent into the world of reality" :

THE JOYS OF HEAVEN.

Oh, who can tell the joy and peace
Which souls redeemed shall know,

When all their earthly sorrows cease,
  Their pride, and pain, and woe.!
Who may describe the matchless love
Which reigneth with the saints above?

What earthly tongue can ever tell
  The pure, unclouded joy
Which in each gentle soul doth swell,
  Unmingled with alloy,
As, bending to the Lord Most High,
They sound His praises through the sky?

Through the high regions of the air,
  On angel wings they glide,
And gaze in wondering silence there
  On scenes to us denied;
Their minds expanding every hour,
And opening like the summer flower.

Though not like them to fade away,
  To die, and bloom no more;
Beyond the reach of fell decay
  They stand in light and power;
But pure, eternal, free from care,
They join in endless praises there!

When first they leave this world of woe
  For fair, immortal scenes of light,
Angels attend them from below,
  And upward wing their joyful flight;
Where, fired with heavenly rapture's flame,
They raise on high Jehovah's name.

O'er the broad arch of heaven it peals,
  While shouts of praise unnumbered flow;

The full, sweet notes sublimely swell,
And prostrate angels humbly bow ;
Each harp is tuned to joy above,
Its theme, a Saviour's matchless love.

The dulcet voice, which here below
Charmed with delight each listening ear,
Mixed with no lingering tone of woe,
Swelling harmonious, soft, and clear,
Will sweetly fill the courts above,
In strains of heavenly peace and love.

The brilliant genius, which on earth
Is struggling with disease and pain,
Will there unfold in power and light,
Naught its bright current to restrain ;
And as each brilliant day rolls on,
'T will find some grace till then unknown.

And as the countless years flit by,
Their minds progressing still,
The more they know, these saints on high
Praise more His sovereign will ;
No breath from sorrow's whirlwind blast
Around their footsteps cast.

From their high throne they gaze abroad
On vast creation's wondrous plan,
And own the power, the might of God,
In each resplendent work they scan ;
Though sun and moon to naught return,
Like stars these souls redeemed shall burn.

Oh ! who could wish to stay below,
If sure of such a home as this,

Where streams of love serenely flow,
And every heart is filled with bliss?
They praise, and worship, and adore
The Lord of heaven for evermore.

During this dangerous illness she became acquainted with Miss Sedgwick. The first visit of that most excellent and justly distinguished person, was when Margaret was in a state of extreme debility. It laid the foundation of an attachment on the part of the latter which continued until her death. The visit was repeated; a correspondence afterwards took place, and the friendship of Miss Sedgwick became to the little enthusiast a source of the worthiest pride and purest enjoyment throughout the remainder of her brief existence.

At length the violence of her malady gave way to skilful remedies and the most tender and unremitting assiduity. When enabled to leave her chamber, she rallied her spirits, made great exertions to be cheerful, and strove to persuade herself that all might yet be well with her. Even her parents, with that singular self-delusion inseparable from this cruelly flattering malady, began to indulge a trembling hope that she might still be spared to them.

In the month of July her health being sufficiently re-established to bear the fatigues of

travelling, she was taken by her mother and eldest brother on a tour to Dutchess county and the western part of New York. On leaving home, she wrote the following lines, expressive of the feelings called forth by the events of the few preceding months, and of a foreboding that she should never return :

FAREWELL TO RUREMONT.

Oh ! sadly I gaze on this beautiful landscape,
And silent and slow do the big tear-drops swell ;
And I haste to my task, while the deep sigh is breaking,
To bid thee, sweet Ruremont, a lasting farewell.

Oh ! soft are the breezes which play round thy valley,
And warm are the sunbeams which gild thee with light ;
All clear and serenely the deep waves are rolling,
The sky in its radiance is dazzlingly bright.

Oh ! gayly the birds 'mid thy dark vines are sporting,
And, heaven-taught, pouring their gladness in song ;
While the rose and the lily their fair heads are bending
To hear the soft anthems float gently along.

Full many an hour have I bent o'er thy waters,
Or watched the light clouds with a joy-beaming eye,
Till, delighted, I longed for the eagle's swift pinions,
To pierce the full depths of that beautiful sky.

Though wild were the fancies which dwelt in my bosom,
Though endless the visions which swept o'er my soul,
Indulging those dreams was my dearest enjoyment,—
Enjoyment unmingled, unchained by control!

But each garden of earth has a something of sorrow,
A thorn in its rose, or a blight in its breeze;
Though blooming as Eden, a shadow hangs o'er thee,
The spirit of darkness, of pain, of disease!

Yes, Ruremont! thy brow, in its loveliness decked,
Is entwined with a fatal but beautiful wreath;
For thy green leaves have shrunk at the mourner's cold touch,
And thy pale flowers have wept in the presence of death.

Yon violets, which bloom in their delicate freshness,
Were strewed o'er the grave of our fairest and best;
Yon roses, which charm by their richness and fragrance,
Have withered and died on his icy-cold breast.

The soft voice of Spring had just breathed o'er the valley,
The sweet birds just carolled their song in her bower,
When the angel of Death in his terror swept o'er us,
And placed in his bosom our fragile young flower.

Thus, Ruremont, we mourn not thy beauties alone,
Thy flowers in their freshness, thy stream in its pride;

But we leave the loved scene of our mourning and tears,—
We leave the dear spot where our cherished one died.

The mantle of beauty thrown gracefully o'er thee,
Must touch a soft chord in each delicate heart;
But the tie is more sacred which bids us deplore thee,—
Endeared by affection, 't is harder to part.

The scene of enjoyment is ever most lovely,
Where blissful young spirits dance mirthful and glad;
But when Sorrow has mingled her tears with our pleasure,
Our love is more tender, our parting more sad.

How mild is the wing of this delicate zephyr,
Which fans in its coolness my feverish brow!
But that light wing is laden with breezes that wither,
And check the warm current of life in its flow.

Why blight such an Eden, O spirit of terror!
Which sweepest thy thousands each hour to the tomb?
Why, why shouldst thou roam o'er this beautiful valley,
And mingle thy breath with the rose's perfume?

The sun rises bright o'er the clear dancing waters,
And tinges with gold every light waving tree,
And the young birds are singing their welcome to morning—
Alas! they will sing it no longer for me!

The young buds of Summer their soft eyes are opening,
The wild flowers are bending the pure ripples o'er;
But I bid them farewell, and my heart is nigh breaking
To think I shall see them and tend them no more.

I mark yonder path, where so often I 've wandered,
Yon moss-covered rock, with its sheltering tree,
And a sigh of deep sadness bursts forth to remember
That no more its soft verdure shall blossom for me.

How often my thoughts, to these loved scenes returning,
Shall brood o'er the past with its joy and its pain;
Till waking at last from the long pleasing slumber,
I sigh to behold thee, thus blooming again.

The little party was absent on its western tour about two months. "Margaret," says her mother, "appeared to enjoy the scenery, and everything during the journey interested her; but there was a sadness in her countenance, a pensiveness in her manner, unless excited by external circumstances, which deeply affected me. She watched every variation in my countenance; marked every little attention directed to herself,—such as an alteration in her diet, dress, exposure to the changes of weather,—yet still discovered an unwillingness to speak of her declining health, and labored to conceal every unfavorable symptom or

change for the worse. This, of course, imposed upon me the most painful restraint. How heart-breaking to find that she considered my tongue as the herald of mournful tidings, and my face as the mirror of evil to come! How true that self-deception seems to be an almost invariable symptom attending this dreadful complaint! Margaret, all unconscious of the rapid strides of the destroyer, taught herself to believe that the alarming symptoms of her case existed only in the imagination of her too anxious mother. Yet knowing my experience in these matters, she still doubted and trembled and feared to ask, lest a confirmation of her vague apprehensions should be the result. She avoided the slightest allusion to the subject of her disease in any way; and in the morbid excitement of her mind it appeared to her almost like accusing her of something wrong to say she was not well."

The following letter was written by her to Miss Sedgwick, after her arrival in Dutchess County:

"LITHGOW, DUTCHESS COUNTY.

"Happy as I am, my dear madam, in the privilege of writing to you, I cannot permit another day to pass ere I inform you of our safe arrival at one of the most lovely spots in

this beautiful and healthy country. Our passage up the river was rather tedious, being debarred the pleasure of remaining upon deck, but this privation was counterbalanced by the pleasure of a few moments' conversation with dear brother, who was permitted to meet us when the boat stopped at West Point. Arrived at Poughkeepsie, brother M. procured a private carriage, which was to convey us to the end of our journey, a distance of twenty miles. The drive was delightful! The scenery ever changing, ever beautiful! We arrived at Lithgow without much fatigue, where a hearty welcome, that sweetest of cordials, was awaiting us. Oh, it is a lovely spot! I thought Ruremont the perfection of beauty! but here I find the flowers as blooming, the birds as gay, the air as sweet, and the prospect far more varied and extensive. 'T is true we have lost the beautiful East River, with its crowd of vessels sweeping gracefully along; but here are hills crowned with the richest foliage, valleys sprinkled with flowers, and watered with winding rivulets; and here, what we prize more than all, a mild, salubrious air, which seems, in the words of the divine poet, 'to bear healing in its wings.' Dear mother bore the fatigue of our journey better than we anticipated; and although I do not think she is permanently better, she cer-

tainly breathes more freely, and seems altogether more comfortable, than when in the city. Oh! how sincerely I hope that a change of air and scene may raise her spirits and renovate her strength. She is now in the midst of friends whom she has known and loved for many years, and surrounded by scenes connected with many of her earliest remembrances. Farewell, my dear madam! Please give my love to your dear little niece; and should you have the leisure and inclination to answer this, believe me your letter will be a source of much gratification to your highly obliged little friend,

" M. M. DAVIDSON.

" Miss CATHERINE SEDGWICK,
" *August*, 1836."

The travellers returned to Ruremont in September. The tour had been of service to Margaret, and she endeavored to persuade herself that she was quite well. If asked about her health, her reply was, that " If her friends did not tell her she was ill, she should not, from her own feelings, suspect it." That she was, notwithstanding, dubious on this subject, was evident from her avoiding to speak about it, and from the uneasiness she manifested when it was alluded to. It was still more evident from the change that took place in her habits and pursuits; she tacitly adopted the course of

conduct that had repeatedly and anxiously, but too often vainly, been urged by her mother, as calculated to allay the morbid irritability of her system. She gave up her studies, rarely indulged in writing or drawing, and contented herself with light reading, with playing a few simple airs on the piano, and with any other trivial mode of passing away the time. The want of her favorite occupations, however, soon made the hours move heavily with her. Above all things, she missed the exacting exercise of the pen, against which she had been especially warned. Her mother observed the listlessness and melancholy that were stealing over her, and hoped a change of scene might banish them. The airs from the river, too, had been pronounced unfavorable to her health; the family, therefore, removed to town. The change of residence, however, did not produce the desired effect. She became more and more dissatisfied with herself, and with the life of idleness, as she considered it, that she was leading; but still she had resolved to give the prescribed system a thorough trial. A new source of solicitude was now awakened in the bosom of her anxious mother, who read in her mournfully quiet manner and submissive silence the painful effects of compliance with her advice. There was not a murmur, however,

from the lips of Margaret, to give rise to this solicitude; on the contrary, whenever she caught her mother's eye fixed anxiously and inquiringly on her, she would turn away and assume an air of cheerfulness.

Six months had passed in this inactive manner. "She was seated one day by my side," says Mrs. Davidson, "weary and restless, and scarcely knowing what to do with herself, when, marking the traces of grief upon my face, she threw her arms about my neck, and, kissing me, exclaimed, 'My dear, dear mother!' 'What is it affects you now, my child?' 'Oh, I know you are longing for something from my pen!' I saw the secret craving of the spirit that gave rise to the suggestion. 'I do, indeed, my dear, delight in the effusions from your pen, but the exertion will injure you.' 'Mamma, I *must write!* I can hold out no longer! I will return to my pen, my pencil, and my books, and shall again be happy!' I pressed her to my bosom, and cautioned her to remember she was feeble. 'Mother,' exclaimed she, 'I am well! I wish you were only as well as I am!'"

The heart of the mother was not proof against these appeals; indeed she had almost as much need of self-denial on this subject as her child, so much did she delight in these

early blossomings of her talent. Margaret was again left to her own impulses. All the frivolous expedients for what is usually termed *killing time* were discarded by her with contempt; her studies were resumed; in the sacred writings and in the pages of history she sought fitting aliment for her mind, half famished by its long abstinence; her poetical vein again burst forth, and the following lines, written at the time, show the excitement and elevation of her feelings:

EARTH.

Earth! thou hast naught to satisfy
The cravings of immortal mind!
Earth! thou hast nothing pure and high
The soaring, struggling soul to bind.

Impatient of its long delay,
The pinioned spirit fain would roam,
And leave this crumbling house of clay,
To seek, above, its own bright home!

The spirit,—'t is a spark of light
Struck from our God's eternal throne,
Which pierces through these clouds of night,
And longs to shine where once it shone!

Earth! there will come an awful day,
When thou shalt crumble into naught;
When thou shalt melt beneath that ray
From whence thy splendors first were caught.

Quenched in the glories of its God,
  Yon burning lamp shall then expire;
And flames, from heaven's own altar sent,
  Shall light the great funereal pyre.

Yes, thou must die! and yon pure depths
  Back from thy darkened brow shall roll;
But never can the tyrant Death
  Arrest this feeble, trusting soul.

When that great Voice, which formed thee first,
  Shall tell, surrounding world, thy doom,
Then the pure soul, enchained by thee,
  Shall rise triumphant o'er thy tomb.

Then on, still on, the unfettered mind
  Through realms of endless space shall fly;
No earth to dim, no chain to bind,
  Too pure to sin, too great to die.

Earth! thou hast naught to satisfy
  The cravings of immortal mind!
Earth! thou hast nothing pure or high,
  The soaring, struggling soul to bind.

Yet is this never-dying ray
  Caught in thy cold, delusive snares,
Cased in a cell of mouldering clay,
  And bowed by woes, and pain, and cares!

Oh! how mysterious is the bond
  Which blends the earthly with the pure,
And mingles that which death may blight
  With that which ever must endure!

Arise, my soul, from all below,
And gaze upon thy destined home,
The heaven of heavens, the throne of God,
Where sin and care can never come.

Prepare thee for a state of bliss,
Unclouded by this mortal veil,
Where thou shalt see thy Maker's face,
And dews from heaven's own air inhale.

How sadly do the sins of earth
Deface thy purity and light,
That thus, while gazing at thyself,
Thou shrink'st in horror at the sight.

Compound of weakness and of strength,
Mighty, yet ignorant of thy power!
Loftier than earth, or air, or sea,
Yet meaner than the lowliest flower.

Soaring towards heaven, yet clinging still
To earth, by many a tender tie!
Longing to breathe a purer air,
Yet fearing, trembling thus to die!

She was soon all cheerfulness and enjoyment. Her pen and her pencil were frequently in her hand; she occupied herself also with her needle in embroidery on canvas, and other fancy work. Hope brightened with the exhilaration of her spirits. "I now walk and ride, eat and sleep as usual," she observes in a letter to a young friend, "and although not

well, have strong hopes that the opening spring, which renovates the flowers, and fields, and streams, will revive my enfeebled frame, and restore me to my wonted health." In these moods she was the life of the domestic circle, and these moods were frequent and long. And here we would observe, that though these memoirs, which are furnished principally from the recollections of an afflicted mother, may too often represent this gifted little being as a feeble invalid struggling with mortality, yet in truth her life, though a brief, was a bright and happy one. At times she was full of playful and innocent gayety; at others of intense mental exaltation; and it was the very intensity of her enjoyment that made her so often indulge in those poetic paroxysms, if we may be allowed the expression, which filled her mother with alarm. A few weeks of this intellectual excitement was followed by another rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs, and a long interval of extreme debility. The succeeding winter was one of vicissitude. She had several attacks of bleeding at the lungs, which evidently alarmed her at the time, though she said nothing, and endeavored to repress all manifestation of her feelings. If taken suddenly, she instantly resorted to the sofa, and, by a strong effort, strove to suppress

every emotion. With her eyes closed, her lips compressed, and her thin pale hand resting in that of her anxious mother, she seemed to be waiting the issue. Not a murmur would escape her lips, nor did she ever complain of pain. She would often say, by way of consolation, to her mother, "Mamma, I am highly favored. I hardly know what is meant by pain. I am sure I never, to my recollection, have felt it." The moment she was able to sit up, after one of these alarming attacks, every vestige of a sick chamber must be removed. No medicine, no cap, no bed-gown, no loose wrapper must be in sight. Her beautiful dark hair must be parted on her broad, high forehead, her dress arranged with the same care and neatness as when in perfect health; indeed she studied to banish from her appearance all that might remind her friends that her health was impaired, and, if possible, to drive the idea from her own thoughts. Her reply to every inquiry about her health was, "Well, quite well; or at least *I* feel so, though mother continues to treat me as an invalid. True I have a cold, attended by a cough, that is not willing to leave me; but when the spring returns, with its mild air and sweet blossoms, I think this cough, which alarms mother so much, will leave me."

She had, indeed, a strong desire to live; and the cause of that desire is indicative of her character. With all her retiring modesty, she had an ardent desire for literary distinction. The example of her sister Lucretia was incessantly before her; she was her leading star, and her whole soul was but to emulate her soarings into the pure regions of poetry. Her apprehensions were that she might be cut off in the immaturity of her powers. A simple, but most touching ejaculation, betrayed this feeling, as, when lying on a sofa, in one of those alarming paroxysms of her malady, she turned her eyes, full of mournful sweetness, upon her mother, and, in a low, subdued voice, exclaimed, "Oh! my dear, dear mother! *I am so young!*"

We have said that the example of her sister Lucretia was incessantly before her, and no better proof can be given of it than in the following lines, written at this time, which breathe the heavenly aspirations of her pure young spirit, in strains, to us, quite unearthly. We may have read poetry more artificially perfect in its structure, but never any more truly divine in its inspiration.

TO MY SISTER LUCRETIA.

My sister! With that thrilling word
What thoughts unnumbered wildly spring!
What echoes in my heart are stirred,
While thus I touch the trembling string!

My sister! ere this youthful mind
Could feel the value of thine own;
Ere this infantine heart could bind,
In its deep cell, one look, one tone,

To glide along on memory's stream,
And bring back thrilling thoughts of thee;
Ere I knew aught but childhood's dream,
Thy soul had struggled, and was free!

My sister! with this mortal eye
I ne'er shall see thy form again;
And never shall this mortal ear
Drink in the sweetness of thy strain!

Yet fancy wild and glowing love
Reveal thee to my spirit's view,
Enwreathed with graces from above,
And decked in heaven's own fadeless hue.

Thy glance of pure seraphic light
Sheds o'er my heart its soft'ning ray;
Thy pinions guard my couch by night,
And hover o'er my path by day.

I cannot weep that thou art fled;
For ever blends my soul with thine;

Each thought, by purer impulse led,
Is soaring on to realms divine.

Thy glance unfolds my heart of hearts,
And lays its inmost recess bare ;
Thy voice a heavenly calm imparts,
And soothes each wilder passion there.

I hear thee in the summer breeze,
See thee in all that 's pure or fair ;
Thy whisper in the murmuring trees,
Thy breath, thy spirit everywhere.

Thine eyes, which watch when mortals sleep,
Cast o'er my dreams a radiant hue ;
Thy tears, "such tears as angels weep,"
Fall nightly with the glistening dew.

Thy fingers wake my youthful lyre,
And teach its softer strains to flow ;
Thy spirit checks each vain desire,
And gilds the low'ring brow of woe.

When fancy wings her upward flight
On through the viewless realms of air,
Clothed in its robe of matchless light,
I view thy ransomed spirit there !

Far from her wild delusive dreams,
It leads my raptured soul away,
Where the pure fount of glory streams,
And saints live on through endless day.

When the dim lamp of future years
  Sheds o'er my path its glimmering faint,
First in the view thy form appears,
  My sister, and my guardian saint!

Thou gem of light! my leading star!
  What thou hast been, I strive to be;
When from the path I wander far,
  Oh, turn thy guiding beam on me.

Teach me to fill thy place below,
  That I may dwell with thee above;
To soothe, like thee, a mother's woe,
  And prove, like thine, a sister's love.

Thou wert unfit to dwell with clay,
  For sin too pure, for earth too bright!
And Death, who called thee hence away,
  Placed on his brow a gem of light!

A gem, whose brilliant glow is shed
  Beyond the ocean's swelling wave,
Which gilds the memory of the dead,
  And pours its radiance on thy grave.

When Day hath left his glowing car,
  And Evening spreads her robe of love;
When worlds, like travellers from afar,
  Meet in the azure fields above;

When all is still, and Fancy's realm
  Is opening to the eager view,
Mine eye full oft, in search of thee,
  Roams o'er that vast expanse of blue.

I know that here thy harp is mute,
And quenched the bright poetic fire,
Yet still I bend my ear, to catch
The hymnings of thy seraph lyre.

Oh! if this partial converse now
So joyous to my heart can be,
How must the streams of rapture flow
When both are chainless, both are free!

When borne from earth for evermore,
Our souls in sacred joy unite,
At God's almighty throne adore,
And bathe in beams of endless light!

Away, away, ecstatic dream!
I must not, dare not dwell on thee;
My soul, immersed in life's dark stream,
Is far too earthly to be free.

Though heaven's bright portal were unclosed,
And angels wooed me from on high,
Too much I fear my shrinking soul
Would cast on earth its longing eye.

Teach me to fill thy place below,
That I may dwell with thee above;
To soothe, like thee, a mother's woe,
And prove, like thee, a sister's love.

It was probably this trembling solicitude about the duration of her existence, that made her so anxious, about this time, to employ

every interval of her precarious health in the cultivation of her mental powers. Certain it is, during the winter, checkered as it was with repeated fits of indisposition, she applied herself to historical and other studies with an ardor that often made her mother tremble for the consequences.

The following letters to a young female friend were written during one of these intervals:

"NEW YORK, *February* 26, 1837.

"Notwithstanding all the dangers which might have befallen your letter, my dear Henrietta, it arrived safely at its resting-place, and is now lying open before me, as I am quietly sitting, this chill February morning, to inform you of its safe arrival. I find I was not mistaken in believing you too kind to be displeased at my remissness; and I now hope that through our continued intercourse neither will have cause to complain of the other's negligence.

"For my own part, I am always willing to assign every reason but that of forgetfulness for a friend's silence. Knowing how often I am obliged to claim this indulgence for myself, and how often ill health prevents me from writing to those I love, I am the more ready to frame apologies for others; indeed I think this

spirit of *charity* (if so I may call it) is necessary to the happiness of correspondents, and as I am sure you possess it, I trust we shall both glide quietly along without any of those little *jars* which so often interrupt the purest friendships. And now that my dissertation on letter-writing is at an end, I must proceed to inform you of what I fear will be a disappointment, as it breaks away all those sweet anticipations expressed in your affectionate letter. Father has concluded that we shall not return to Plattsburgh next spring, as he had once intended; he fears the effects of the cold winds of Lake Champlain upon mother and myself, who are both delicate; and as we have so many dear friends in and about the city, a nearer location would be pleasanter to us and to them. We now think seriously of returning to Ballston, that beautiful little village where we have already spent two delightful years; and though in this case I must relinquish the idea of visiting my dear '*old home*' and my dear *young friend*, hope points to the hour when *you* may become *my* guest, and where the charms of novelty will in some degree repay us for the delightful associations and remembrances we had hoped to enjoy. But I cannot help now and then casting a backward glance upon the beautiful scenes you describe,

and wishing myself with you. A philosopher would say, 'Since you cannot enjoy what you desire, turn to the pleasures you may possess, and seek in them consolation for what you have lost'; but I am no philosopher. . . .

"I will endeavor to answer your question about Mrs. Hemans. I have read several lives of this distinguished poetess, by different authors, and in all of them find something new to admire in her character and venerate in her genius! She was a woman of deep feeling, lively fancy, and acute sensibilities; so acute, indeed, as to have formed her chief unhappiness through life. She mingles her own feelings, with her poems so well, that in reading *them* you read *her* character. But there is one thing I have often remarked: the mind soon wearies in perusing many of her pieces at *once*. She expresses those sweet sentiments so often, and introduces the same stream of beautiful ideas so constantly, that they sometimes degenerate into monotony. I know of no higher treat than to read a few of her best productions, and comment upon and feel their beauties; but perusing her *volume* is to me like listening to a strain of sweet music repeated over and over again, until it becomes so familiar to the ear that it loses the charm of variety.

"Now, dear H., is not this presumption in

me, to criticise so exquisite an author? But you desired my opinion, and I have given it to you without reserve.

"You desire me to send you an *original poem* for yourself. Now, my dear Hetty, this is something I am not at present able to do for any of my friends, writing being supposed quite injurious to persons with weak lungs. And I have still another reason. You say the effect of conveying feelings from the heart and recording them on paper, seems to deprive them of half their warmth and ardor! Now, my dear friend, would not the effect of forming them into verse seem to render them still *less* sincere? Is not plain prose, as it slides rapidly from the pen, more apt to speak the feelings of the heart, than when an hour or two is spent in giving them rhyme and measure and all the attributes of poetry? . . ."

TO THE SAME.

"New York, *April* 2, 1837.

"About an hour since, my dear Henrietta, I received your token of remembrance, and commenced my answer with an act of obedience to your sovereign will; but I fear you will repent when too late, and while nodding over the closely written sheet, and peering im-

patiently into each crowded corner, you will secretly wish you had allowed my pen to commence its operations at a more respectful distance from the top of the page. However, the request was your own; I obey like an obedient friend, and you must abide the consequences of your rash demand. Should the first glance at my well-filled sheet be followed by a *yawn* or its last word be welcomed with a smile, you must blame your own imprudence in bringing down upon your luckless head the accumulated nothings of a scribbler like myself. It is indeed true that we shall not return to Plattsburgh; and much as I long to revisit the home of my infancy, and the friends of my earliest remembrance, I shall be obliged to relinquish the pleasure in reality, though fancy, unshackled by earth, shall direct her pinions to the north, and linger, delighted, on the beautiful banks of the Champlain! Methinks I hear you explain, with impatience, '*Fancy!* what is it? I long for something more substantial.' So do I, *ma chère*, but since I cannot hope to behold my dear native village and its dear inhabitants, with *other* eyes than those of fancy, I will e'en employ them to the best of my ability. You may be sure we do not prefer the confined and murky atmosphere of the city to the pure and health-giving breezes

of the country; far from it—we are already preparing to remove, as soon as the mild influence of spring has prevailed over the chilling blasts which we still hear whistling around us; and gladly shall we welcome the day that will release us from our bondage. But there is some drawback to every pleasure—some bitter drop in almost every cup of enjoyment; and we shall taste this most keenly when we bid farewell to the delightful circle of friends who have cheered us during the solitude and confinement of this dreary winter. The New York air, so far from agreeing with us, has deprived us of every enjoyment beyond the boundaries of our own walls, and it will be hard to leave those friends who have taught us to forget the privations of ill health in the pleasure of their society. We have chosen Ballston for our temporary home, from the hope of seeing them oftener *there* than we could in a secluded town, and because pure air, medicinal waters, and good society have all combined to render it a delightful country residence; yet, with all these advantages, it can never possess half the charms of my dear old home!

"That dear old home, where passed my childish years,
When fond affection wiped my infant tears!

Where first I learned from whence my blessings
came,
And lisped, in faltering tones, a *mother's* name!

That *dear* old *home*, where memory fondly clings,
Where eager fancy spreads her soaring wings;
Around whose scenes my thoughts delight to stray
And pass the hours in pleasing dreams away!

Oh, shall I ne'er behold thy waves again,
My native lake, my beautiful Champlain?
Shall I no more above thy ripple bend
In sweet communion with my childhood's friend?

Shall I no more behold thy rolling wave,
The patriot's cradle, and the warrior's grave?
Thy mountains, tinged with daylight's parting glow?
Thy islets, mirror'd in the stream below?

Back! back! thou *present*, robed in shadows lie,
And rise, thou *past*, before my raptured eye!
Fancy shall gild the frowning lapse between,
And Memory's hand shall paint the glowing scene!

Lo! how the view beneath her pencil grows!
The flowret blooms, the winding streamlet flows;
With former friends I trace my footsteps o'er,
And muse, delighted, on my own green shore!

Alas! it fades—the fairy dream is past!
Dissolved the veil by sportive Fancy cast.

Oh, why should thus our brightest dreams depart,
And scenes illusive cheat the longing heart?

Where'er through future life my steps may roam,
I ne'er shall find a spot like thee, my home;
With all my joys the thought of *thee* shall blend,
And, joined with *thee*, shall rise my chilhood's friend.

"Mother is most truly alive to all these feelings. During our first year in New York we were living a few miles from the city, at one of the loveliest situations in the world! I think I have seldom seen a sweeter spot; but all its beauties could not divert her thoughts from our own dear *home*, and despite the superior advantages we there enjoyed, she wept to enjoy it again. But enough of this; if I suffer my fancy to dwell longer upon these loved scenes, I shall scribble over my whole sheet, and, leaving out what I most wish to say, fill it with nothing but 'Home, home, sweet, sweet home!' as the song goes. . . ."

"*June*, 1837.

"Now for the mighty theme upon which I scarcely dare to dwell,—my visit to Plattsburgh! Yes, my dear H., I do think, or rather I do *hope*, that such a time may come when I can at least spend a week with you. I

dare not hope for a longer time, for I know I shall be disappointed. About the middle of this month brother graduates, and will leave West Point for home. He intends to visit Plattsburgh, and it will take much to wean me from my favorite plan of accompanying him. However, all is uncertain,—I must not think of it too much,—but if I do come, it will be with the hope of gaining a still greater pleasure. We are now delightfully situated. Can you not return with me, and make me a visit? What joy is like the joy of anticipation? What pleasure like those we look forward to, through a long lapse of time, and dwell upon as some bright land that we shall inhabit when the *present* shall have become the *past*? I have heard it observed that it was foolish to anticipate—that it was only increasing the pangs of disappointment. No so; do we not, in our most sanguine hopes, acknowledge to ourselves a fear, a doubt, an expectation of disappointment? Shall we lose the enjoyment of the present, because evil may come in future? No, no—if anticipation was not meant for a solace, an alleviation of the sorrows of life, would it have been so strongly implanted in our hearts by the great Director of all our passions? No—it is too precious! I would give up half the *reality* of joy for the sweet antici-

pation. Stop—I have gone too far—for indeed I could *not* resign my visit to you, though I might hope and anticipate for years.

"Just as I had written the above, father interrupted me with an invitation to ride. We have just returned from a long, delightful drive. Though Ballston cannot compare with Plattsburgh for its rich and varied scenery, still there are romantic woods and shady paths which cannot fail to delight the true lover of Nature. . . .

"So you do have the *blues*, eh? I had almost said I was glad of it; but that would be too cruel—I will only say one does not like to be alone, or in anything singular, and I too, once in a while, receive a visit from these provoking imps—are they not? You should not have blamed Scott only (excuse me), but yourself, for selecting such a book to chase away melancholy.

"You ask me if I remember those *story-telling* days? Indeed I do, and nothing affords me more pleasure than the recollection of those happy hours! If my memory could only retain the particulars of my last story, gladly would I resume and continue it when I meet you again. I will ease *your* heart of its fear for *mine*—your scolding did not break it. My dear H., it is not made of such brittle materials

cloud has passed by, and my heart, relieved from its burden, is filled almost to overflowing, with gratitude and joy. After a few hours of dreadful suspense, reaction took place, and since then she has been slowly and steadily improving. In a few days, I hope, she will be able to ride, and breathe some of this delightful air, which cannot fail to invigorate and restore her. My own health has improved astonishingly since my coming here. I walk, and ride, and exercise as much as possible in the open air, and find it of great service to me. Oh, how much I hope to see you here! . . . Do, if possible, try the Ballston air once more. It has been useful to you once, it might be still more so now. You will find warm hearts to welcome you, and we will do all in our power to make your visit pleasant to you. The country does indeed look beautiful! The woods are teeming with wild flowers, and the air is full of melody. The soft, wild warbling of the birds is far more sweet to me than the most labored performances of art; *they* may weary by repetition, but what heart can resist the influence of a lovely day ushered in by the morning song of those sweet carollers! and even to sleep, as it were, by their melodious evening strain! How I wish you could be here to enjoy it with me."

The summer of 1837 was one of the happiest of her fleeting existence. For some time after the family removed to Ballston she was very much confined to the house by the illness of her mother, and the want of a proper female companion to accompany her abroad. At length a Mr. and Mrs. H., estimable and intimate friends, of a highly intellectual character, came to the village. Their society was an invaluable acquisition to Margaret. In company with them she was enabled to enjoy the healthful recreations of the country; to ramble in the woods; to take exercise on horseback, of which she was extremely fond, and to make excursions about the neighborhood; while they exerted a guardian care to prevent her, in her enthusiastic love for rural scenery, from exposing herself to anything detrimental to her health and strength. She gave herself up, for a time, to these exhilarating exercises, abstaining from her usual propensity to overtask her intellect, for she had imbibed the idea that active habits, cheerful recreations, and a holiday frame of mind would effectually reëstablish her health. As usual, in her excited moods, she occasionally carried these really healthful practices to excess, and would often, says her mother, engage, with a palpitating heart and a pulse beating at the rate of one hundred and

thirty in a minute, in all the exercises usually prescribed to *preserve* health in those who are in full possession of the blessing. She was admonished of her danger by several attacks upon her lungs during the summer, but as they were of short duration she still flattered herself that she was getting well. There seemed to be almost an infatuation in her case. The exhilaration of her spirits was at times so great as almost to overpower her. Often would she stand by the window admiring a glorious sunset, until she would be raised into a kind of ecstasy ; her eye would kindle ; a crimson glow would mount into her cheek, and she would indulge in some of her reveries about the glories of heaven and the spirits of her deceased sisters, partly uttering her fancies aloud, until turning and catching her mother's eye fixed painfully upon her, she would throw her arms round her neck, kiss away her tears, and sink exhausted on her bosom. The excitement over, she would resume her calmness, and converse on general topics. Among her writings are fragments hastily scrawled down at this time, showing the vague aspirations of her spirit, and her vain attempts to grasp those shadowy images that sometimes flit across the poetic mind.

"Oh, for a something more than this,
To fill the void within my breast;
A sweet reality of bliss,
A something bright, but unexpressed.

My spirit longs for something higher
Than life's dull stream can e'er supply;
Something to feed this inward fire,
This spark, which never more can die.

I'd hold companionship with all
Of pure, of noble, or divine;
With glowing heart adoring fall,
And kneel at Nature's sylvan shrine.

My soul is like a broken lyre,
Whose loudest, sweetest chord is gone;
A note, half trembling on the wire—
A heart that wants an echoing tone.

When shall I find this shadowy bliss,
This shapeless phantom of the mind?
This something words can ne'er express,
So vague, so faint, so undefined?

Language! thou never canst portray
The fancies floating o'er my soul!
Thou ne'er canst chase the clouds away
Which o'er my changing visions roll!"

And again—

"Oh, I have gazed on forms of light,
Till life seemed ebbing in a tear—

Till in that fleeting space of sight
Were merged the feelings of a year.

And I have heard the voice of song,
Till my full heart gushed wild and free,
And my rapt soul would float along
As if on waves of melody.

But while I glowed at beauty's glance,
I longed to feel a deeper thrill ;
And while I heard that dying strain,
I sighed for something sweeter still.

I have been happy, and my soul
Free from each sorrow, care, regret :
Yet even in these hours of bliss
I long to find them happier yet.

Oft o'er the darkness of my mind
Some meteor thought has glanced at will ;
'T was bright—but ever have I sighed
To find a fancy brighter still.

Why are these restless, vain desires,
Which always grasp at something more,
To feed the spirit's hidden fires,
Which burn unseen—unnoticed soar?

Well might the heathen sage have known
That earth must fail the soul to bind ;
That life, and life's tame joys, alone
Could never chain the ethereal mind."

The above, as we have before observed, are mere fragments unfinished and uncorrected, and some of the verses have a vagueness incident to the mood of mind in which they were conceived and the haste with which they were penned; but in these lofty, indefinite aspirations of a young, half-schooled, and inexperienced mind, we see the early and impatient flutterings of a poetical genius, which, if spared, might have soared to the highest regions.

In a letter written to Miss Sedgwick during the autumn, she speaks of her health as having rapidly improved. "I am no longer afflicted by the cough, and mother feels it unnecessary now to speak to me as being ill; though my health is, and probably always will be, very delicate."—"And she really did appear better," observes her mother, "and even I, who had ever been nervously alive to every symptom of her disease, was deluded by those favorable appearances, and began to entertain a hope that she might yet recover, when another sudden attack of bleeding at the lungs convinced us of the fallacy of our hopes, and warned us to take every measure to ward off the severity of the climate in the coming winter. A consultation was held between her father and our favorite physician, and the re-

sult was that she was to keep within doors. This was indeed sad, but, after an evident struggle with her own mind, she submitted, with her accustomed good sense, to the decree. All that affection could suggest was done, to prevent the effects of this seclusion on her spirits." A cheerful room was allotted to her, commanding an agreeable prospect, and communicating, by folding-doors, to a commodious parlor; the temperature of the whole apartment was regulated by a thermometer. Hither her books, writing-table, drawing implements, and fancy work were transported. When once established in these winter-quarters, she became contented and cheerful. "She read and wrote," says her mother, "and amused herself with drawing and needlework. After spending as much time as I dare permit in the more serious studies in which she was engaged, she would unbend her mind with one of Scott's delightful novels, or play with the kitten; and at evening we were usually joined by our interesting friends, Mr. and Mrs. H. It is now a melancholy satisfaction to me to believe that she could not, in her state of health, be happier or more pleasantly situated. She was always charmed with the conversation of Mr. H., and followed him through all the mazes of philosophy with the greatest delight. She

read Cousin with a high zest, and produced an abstract from it which gave a convincing proof that she understood the principles there laid down; after which she gave a complete analysis of the *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*, by the same author. Her mind must have been deeply engrossed by these studies, yet it was not visible from her manner. During this short winter she accomplished what to many would have been the labor of years, yet there was no haste, no flurry; she pursued quietly her round of occupations, always cheerful. The hours flew swiftly by; not a moment lagged. I think she never spent a more happy winter than this, with all its varied employments."

The following extract from a letter to one of her young friends gives an idea of her course of reading during this winter; and how, in her precocious mind, the playfulness of the child mingled with the thoughtfulness of the woman:

"You ask me what I am reading. Alas! book-worm as I am, it makes me draw a long breath to contemplate the books I have laid out for perusal. In the first place, I am reading Condillac's *Ancient History*, in French, twenty-four volumes; Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in four large vol-

umes. I have not quite finished *Josephus*. In my moments of recreation I am poring over Scott's bewitching *novels*. I wish we could give them some other name instead of *novels*, for they certainly should not bear the same title with the thousand-and-one productions of that class daily swarming from the press. Do you think they ought? So pure, so pathetic, so historical, and, above all, so true to human nature! How beautifully he mingles the sad with the grotesque, in such a manner that the opposite feelings they excite harmonize perfectly with each other. His works can be read over and over again, and every time with a growing sense of their beauties. Do you read French? If so, I wish we could read the same works together. It would be a great pleasure to me at least, and our mutual remarks might benefit each other. Supposing you will be pleased to hear of my amusements, however trifling, I will venture to name one, at the risk of lowering any great opinion you may have formed of my wisdom! A pet kitten! Yes, my dear Henrietta, a sweet little creature, with a graceful shape, playful temper, white breast, and dear little innocent eyes, which completely belie the reputed disposition of a *cat*. He is neither deceitful, ferocious, nor ungrateful, but is certainly the

most rational being for an irrational one, I ever saw. He is now snugly lying in my lap, watching every movement of my pen with a quiet purr of contentment. Have you such a pet? I wish you had, that we might both play with them at the same time, sunset, for instance, and while so far distant, feel that we were enjoying ourselves in the selfsame way. You ask what I think of animal magnetism? My dear Hetty, I have not troubled my head about it. I hear of it from every quarter, and mentioned so often with contempt, that I have thought of it only as an absurdity. If I understand it rightly, the leading principle is the influence of one mind upon another; there is undoubtedly such an influence, to a reasonable degree, but as to throwing one into a magnetic sleep—presenting visions before their eyes of scenes passing afar off, it seems almost too ridiculous! Still it may all be *true!* A hundred years since, what would have been our feelings to see what is now here so common, a *steam-engine*, breathing fire and smoke, gliding along with the rapidity of thought, and carrying at its *black heels* a train which a hundred men would fail to move. We know not but this apparent absurdity, this magnetism, may be a great and mysterious secret, which the course of time will reveal and adapt to im-

portant purposes. . . . What are you studying? Do you play? Do you draw? Please tell me everything. I wish I could form some picture of you to my mind's eye. It is so tormenting to correspond with a dear friend, and have no likeness of them in our fancy. I remember everything as it used to be, but time makes great changes! Now here comes my saucy kitten, and springs upon the table before me, as if he had a perfect right there. 'What do you mean, little puss? Come, sit for your portrait.' I hope, dear H., you will fully appreciate this painting, which I consider as my *chef-d'œuvre*, and preserve it as a faithful likeness of my inimitable cat. But do forgive me so much nonsense! But I feel that to you I can rattle off anything that comes uppermost. It is near night, and the sun is setting so beautifully after the long storm, that I could not sit here much longer, even if I had a whole page to fill. How splendid the moon must look on the bright waters of the Champlain this night! Good-by, good-by—love to all from all, and believe me, now as ever,

"Your sincere friend,

"MARGARET."

The following passages from her mother's memorandums touch upon matters of more

solemn interest, which occasionally occupied her young mind:

"During the whole of the preceding summer her mind had dwelt much upon the subject of religion. Much of her time was devoted to serious reflection, self-examination, and prayer. But she evidently shunned all conversation upon the subject. It was a theme she had always conversed upon with pleasure until *now*. This not only surprised but pained me. I was a silent but close and anxious observer of the operations of her mind, and saw that, with all her apparent cheerfulness she was ill at ease; perfect silence was however maintained on both sides until the winter commenced, and brought us more closely together. Then her young heart again reposed itself, in confiding love, upon the bosom that heretofore had shared its every thought, and the subject became one of daily discussion. I found her mind perplexed and her ideas confused by points of doctrine which she could neither understand nor reconcile with her views of the justice and benevolence of God, as exhibited in the Scriptures. Her views of the Divine character and attributes had ever been of that elevated cast, which, while they raised her mind above all grosser things, sublimated and purified her feelings and desires, and prepared her for that

bright and holy communion without which she could enjoy nothing. Her faith was of that character 'which casteth out fear.' It was sweet and soothing to depend upon Jesus for salvation. It was delightful to behold, in the all-imposing majesty of God, a kind and tender father, who pitied her infirmities, and on whose justice and benevolence she could rest for time and eternity. She had, during the summer, heard much disputation on the doctrinal points, which she had silently and carefully examined, and had been shocked at the position which many professing Christians had taken; she saw much inconsistency, much bitterness of spirit, on points which she had been taught to consider not essential to salvation; she saw that the spirit of persecution and uncharitableness, which pervaded many classes of Christians, had almost totally destroyed that bond of brotherhood which ought firmly to unite the followers of the humble Saviour; and she could not reconcile these feelings with her ideas of the Christian character. Her meekness and humility led her sometimes to doubt her own state. She felt that her religious duties were but too feebly performed, and that without divine assistance all her resolutions to be more faithful were vain. She often said, 'Mamma, I am far from

right. I resolve and re-resolve, and yet remain the same.' I had shunned everything that savored of controversy, knowing her enthusiasm and extreme sensibility on the subject of religion; I dreaded the excitement it might create. But I now more fully explained, as well as I was able, the simple and divine truths of the Gospel and held up to her view the beauty and benevolence of the Father's character, and the unbounded love which could have devised the atoning sacrifice; and advised her at present to avoid controversial writings, and make a more thorough examination of the Scriptures, that she might found her principles upon the evidences to be deduced from that groundwork of our faith, unbiased by the opinions and prejudices of *any man*. I represented to her that, young as she was, while in feeble health, researches into those knotty and disputed subjects would only confuse her mind; that there was enough of plain practical religion to be gathered from the Bible; and urged the importance of frequent and earnest prayer, which, with God's blessing, would compose the agitation of her mind, which I considered as essential to her inward peace."

On one occasion, while perusing Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, with great interest, her mother ventured to sound her feelings upon the subject

of literary fame, and asked her whether she had no ambition to have her name go down to posterity. She took her mother's hand with enthusiasm, kissed her cheek, and, retiring to the other room, in less than an hour returned with the following lines:

TO DIE AND BE FORGOTTEN.

A few short years will roll along,
  With mingled joy and pain,
Then shall I pass—a broken tone!
  An echo of a strain!

Then shall I fade away from life,
  Like cloud-tints from the sky,
When the breeze sweeps their surface o'er,
  And they are lost for aye.

The world will laugh, and weep, and sing,
  As gayly as before,
But cold and silent I shall be—
  As I have been, no more.

The haunts I loved, the flowers I nursed,
  Will bloom as sweetly still,
But other hearts and other hands
  My vacant place shall fill.

And even mighty love must fail
  To bind my memory here—
Like fragrance round the faded rose,
  'T will perish with the year.

The soul may look, with fervent hope,
To worlds of future bliss;
But oh, how saddening to the heart
To be forgot in this!

How many a noble mind hath shrunk
From death without a name;
Hath looked beyond his shadowy realm,
And lived and died for Fame?

Could we not view the darksome grave
With calmer, steadier eye,
If conscious that a world's regret
Would seek us where we lie?

Faith points, with mild, confiding glance,
To realms of bliss above,
Where peace and joy and justice reign,
And never-dying love;

But still our earthly feelings cling
Around this bounded spot;
There is a something burns within
Which will not be forgot.

It cares not for a gorgeous hearse,
For waving torch and plume;
For pealing hymn, funereal verse,
Or richly sculptured tomb;

But it would live undimmed and fresh,
When flickering life departs;
Would find a pure and honored grave
Embalmed in kindred hearts.

Who would not brave a life of tears
To win an honored name,
One sweet and heart-awakening tone
From the silver trump of Fame?

To be, when countless years have past,
The good man's glowing theme?
To be—but I—what right have I
To this bewildering dream?

Oh, it is vain, and worse than vain,
To dwell on thoughts like these;
I, a frail child, whose feeble frame
Already knows disease!

Who, ere another spring may dawn,
Another summer bloom,
May, like the flowers of autumn, lie
A tenant of the tomb.

Away, away, presumptuous thought!
I will not dwell on thee!
For what, alas! am I to Fame,
And what is Fame to me?

Let all these wild and longing thoughts
With the dying year expire,
And I will nurse within my breast
A purer, holier fire!

Yes, I will seek my mind to win
From all these dreams of strife,
And toil to write my name within
The glorious Book of Life.

Then shall old Time, who, rolling on,
Impels me towards the tomb,
Prepare for me a glorious crown,
Through endless years to bloom.

December, 1837.

The confinement to the house, in a graduated temperature, the round of cheerful occupations, and the unremitting care taken of her, produced a visible melioration of her symptoms. Her cough gradually subsided, the morbid irritability of her system, producing often an unnatural flow of spirits, was quieted; as usual, she looked forward to spring as the genial and delightful season that was to restore her to perfect health and freedom.

Christmas was approaching, which had ever been a time of social enjoyment in the family; as it drew near, however, the remembrance of those lost from the fireside circle was painfully felt by Mrs. Davidson. Margaret saw the gloom on her mother's brow, and, kissing her, exclaimed, "Dear mother, do not let us waste our present happiness in useless repining. You see I am well, and you are more comfortable, and dear father is in good health and spirits. Let us enjoy the present hour, and banish vain regrets!" Having given this wholesome advice, she tripped off with a light step to prepare Christmas presents for the ser-

vants, which were to be distributed by St. Nicholas, or Santa Claus, in the old traditional way. Every animated being, rational or irrational, must share her liberality on that day of festivity and joy. Her Jenny, a little bay pony on which she had taken many healthful and delightful rides, must have a gayer blanket and an extra allowance of oats. "On Christmas morning," says her mother, "she woke with the first sound of the old house-clock striking the hour of five, and twining her arms round my neck (for during this winter she shared my bed), and kissing me again and again, exclaimed,—

> " ' Wake, mother, wake to youthful glee,
> The golden sun is dawning ' ;

then slipping a piece of paper into my hand, she sprang out of bed, and danced about the carpet, her kitten in her arms, with all the sportive glee of childhood. When I gazed upon her young face, so bright, so animated, and beautiful, beaming with innocence and love, and thought that perhaps this was the last anniversary of her Saviour's birth she might spend on earth, I could not suppress my emotions ; I caught her to my bosom in an agony of tenderness, while she, all unconscious of the nature of my feelings, returned

my caresses with playful fondness." The following verses were contained in the above-mentioned paper:

TO MY MOTHER AT CHRISTMAS.

Wake, mother, wake to hope and glee,
The golden sun is dawning!
Wake, mother, wake, and hail with me
This happy Christmas morning!

Each eye is bright with pleasure's glow,
Each lip is laughing merrily;
A smile hath passed o'er Winter's brow,
And the very snow looks cheerily.

Hark to the voice of the awakened day,
To the sleigh-bells gayly ringing,
While a thousand, thousand happy hearts
Their Christmas lays are singing.

'T is a joyous hour of mirth and love,
And my heart is overflowing!
Come, let us raise our thoughts above,
While pure and fresh and glowing.

'T is the happiest day of the rolling year,
But it comes in a robe of mourning,
Nor light, nor life, nor bloom is here
Its icy shroud adorning.

It comes when all around is dark,
'T is meet it so should be,

For its joy is the joy of the happy heart,
The spirit's jubilee.

It does not need the bloom of Spring,
Or Summer's light and gladness,
For Love has spread her beaming wing
O'er Winter's brow of sadness.

'T was thus He came, beneath a cloud,
His spirit's light concealing,
No crown of earth, no kingly robe
His heavenly power revealing.

His soul was pure, His mission love,
His aim a world's redeeming;
To raise the darkened soul above
Its wild and sinful dreaming.

With all His Father's power and love,
The cords of guilt to sever;
To ope a sacred fount of light,
Which flows, shall flow forever.

Then we shall hail the glorious day,
The spirit's new creation,
And pour our grateful feelings forth,
A pure and warm libation.

Wake, mother, wake to chastened joy,
The golden sun is dawning!
Wake, mother, wake, and hail with me
This happy Christmas morning.

"The last day of the year 1837 arrived. 'Mamma,' said she, 'will you sit up with me to-night until after twelve?' I looked inquiringly. She replied, 'I wish to bid farewell to the present, and to welcome the coming year.' After the family retired, and we had seated ourselves by a cheerful fire to spend the hours which would intervene until the year 1838 should dawn upon us, she was serious, but not sad, and as if she had nothing more than usual upon her mind, took some light sewing in her hand, and so interested me by her conversation that I scarcely noticed the flight of time. At half-past eleven she handed me a book, pointing to some interesting article to amuse me, then took her seat at the writing-table, and composed the piece on the departure of the old year 1837 and the commencement of the new one 1838. When she had finished the Farewell, except the last verse, it wanted a few minutes of twelve. She rested her arms in silence upon the table, apparently absorbed in meditation. The clock struck—a sort of deep thought passed over her expressive face—she remained solemn and silent until the last tone had ceased to vibrate, when she again resumed her pen and wrote. The bell had ceased. When the clock struck, I arose from my seat and stood leaning over the back of her chair, with a mind deeply sol-

emnized by a scene so new and interesting. The words flowed rapidly from her pen, without haste or confusion, and at one o'clock we were quietly in bed."

We again subjoin the poem alluded to, trusting that these effusions, which are so intimately connected with her personal history, will be read with greater interest when given in conjunction with the scenes and circumstances which prompted them.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF THE YEAR 1837 AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF 1838.

Hark! to the house-clock's measured chime,
As it cries to the startled ear,
"A dirge for the soul of departing Time,
A requiem for the year!"

Thou art passing away to the mighty past,
Where thy countless brethren sleep,
Till the great Archangel's trumpet-blast
Shall waken land and deep.

Oh, the lovely and beautiful things that lie
On thy cold and motionless breast!
Oh, the tears, the rejoicings, the smiles, the sighs,
Departing with thee to their rest.

Thou wert ushered to life amid darkness and gloom,
But the cold icy cloud passed away,
And Spring, in her verdure and freshness and bloom,
Touched with glory thy mantle of gray.

The flow'rets burst forth in their beauty—the trees
In their exquisite robes were arrayed,
But thou glidedst along, and the flower and the leaf
At the sound of thy footsteps decayed.

And fairer young blossoms were blooming alone,
And they died at the glance of thine eye,
But a life was within which should rise o'er their own,
And a spirit thou could'st not destroy.

Thou hast folded thy pinions, thy race is complete,
And fulfilled the Creator's behest,
Then, adieu to thee, year of our sorrows and joys,
And peaceful and long be thy rest.

Farewell! for thy truth-written record is full,
And the page weeps for sorrow and crime;
Farewell! for the leaf hath shut down on the past,
And concealed the dark annals of time.

The bell! it hath ceased with its iron tongue
To ring on the startled ear,
The dirge o'er the grave of the lost one is rung,
All hail to the new-born year!

All hail to the new-born year!
To the child of hope and fear!
He comes on his car of state,
And weaves our web of fate;
And he opens his robe to receive us all,
And we live or die, and we rise or fall,
In the arms of the new-born year!

Hope! spread thy soaring wings!
Look forth on the boundless sea,

And trace thy bright and beautiful things
On the veil of the great To Be.

Build palaces broad as the sky,
And store them with treasures of light,
Let exquisite visions bewilder the eye,
And illumine the darkness of night.

We are gliding fast from the buried year,
And the present is no more;
But, Hope, we will borrow thy sparkling gear,
And shroud the future o'er.

Our tears and sighs shall sleep
In the grave of the silent Past;
We will raise up flowers—nor weep—
That the air-hues may not last.

We will dream our dreams of joy,
Ah! Fear! why darken the scene?
Why sprinkle that ominous tear
My beautiful visions between?

Hath not Sorrow swift wings of her own,
That thou must assist in her flight?
Is not daylight too rapidly gone,
That thou must urge onward the night?

Ah! leave me to fancy, to hope,
For grief will too quickly be here;
Ah! leave me to shadow forth figures of light,
In the mystical robe of the year.

'T is true they may never assume
The substance of pleasure—the real—

But believe me our purest of joy
Consists in the vague—the ideal.

Then away to the darksome cave,
With thy sisters, the sigh and the tear;
We will drink, in the crystal wave,
The health of the new-born year.

"She had been for some time thinking of a subject for a poem, and the next day, which was the 1st of January, came to me in great perplexity and asked my advice. I had long desired that she would direct her attention to the beautiful and sublime narratives of the Old Testament, and now proposed that she should take the Bible and examine it with that view. After an hour or two spent in research she remarked that there were many, very many subjects of deep and thrilling interest; but, if she now should make a failure, her discouragement would be such as to prevent her from ever making another attempt. 'I am now,' she said, 'trying my wings; I will take a lighter subject at first: if I succeed, I will then write a more perfect poem, founded upon Sacred History.'"

She accordingly took as a theme a prose tale, in a current work of the day, and wrote several pages with a flowing pen, but soon threw them by, dissatisfied. It was irksome

to employ the thoughts and fancies of another, and to have to adapt her own to the plan of the author. She wanted something original. "After some further effort," says Mrs. Davidson, "she came to me out of spirits and in tears. 'Mother,' said she, 'I must give it up after all.' I asked the reason, and then remarked that as she had already so many labors upon her hands, and was still feeble, it might be the wisest course. 'O mother,' said she, 'that is not the reason; my head and my heart are full; poetic images are crowding upon my brain, but every subject has been monopolized. "There is nothing new under the sun."' I said: 'My daughter, that others have written upon a subject is not an objection. The most eminent writers do not always choose what is new.' 'Mother, dear mother, what can I say upon a theme which has been touched by the greatest men of this or some other age?—I, a mere child; it is absurd in me to think of it.' She dropped beside me on the sofa, laid her head upon my bosom, and sobbed violently. I wiped the tears from her face, while my own were fast flowing, and strove to soothe the tumult of her mind. . . . When we were both more calm, I said, 'Margaret, I had hoped that during this winter you would not have commenced

or applied yourself to any important work; but, if you feel in that way, I will not urge you to resign an occupation which gives you such exquisite enjoyment.' "

Mrs. Davidson then went on to show to her that, notwithstanding the number of poets that had written, the themes and materials for poetry are inexhaustible. By degrees Margaret became composed; took up a book and read. The words of her mother dwelt in her mind. In a few days she brought her mother the introduction to a projected poem to be called *Leonore*. Mrs. Davidson was touched at finding the remarks she had made for the purpose of soothing the agitation of her daughter had served to kindle her imagination, and were poured forth with eloquence in those verses. The excitement continued, and the poem of *Leonore* was completed, corrected, and copied into her book by the 1st of March; having written her plan in prose at full length, containing about the same number of lines as the poem. "During its progress," says Mrs. Davidson, "when fatigued with writing, she would take her kitten and recline upon the sofa, asking me to relate to her some of the scenes of the last war. Accordingly I would while away our solitude by repeating anecdotes of that period; and before *Leonore* was com-

pleted she had advanced several pages in a prose tale, the scene of which was laid upon Lake Champlain during the last war. She at the same time executed faces and figures in crayon which would not have disgraced the pencil of an artist. Her labors were truly immense. Yet a stranger coming occasionally to the house would hardly observe that she had any pressing avocations."

The following are extracts from a rough draught of a letter written to Miss Sedgwick about this time:

"My dear Madam,—

"I wish I could express to you my pleasure on receiving your kind and affectionate letter. So far from considering myself neglected by your silence, I felt it a great privilege to be permitted to write to you, and knew that I ought not to expect a regular answer to every letter, even while I was longing, day after day, to receive this gratifying token of remembrance. Unless you had witnessed, I fear you would hardly believe my extravagant delight on reading the dear little folded paper so expressive of your kind recollection. I positively danced for joy, bestowed a thousand caresses upon everybody and everything I loved, dreamed of you all night, and arose next morning (with a heart

full) to answer your letter; but was prevented by indisposition, and have not been able until now to perform a most pleasing duty by acknowledging its receipt. My health during the past winter has been much better than we had anticipated. It is true I have been, with dear mother, entirely confined to the house; but being able to read, write, and perform all my usual employments, I feel that I have much more reason to be thankful for the blessings continued to me, than to repine because a few have been denied. But spring is now here in name, if not in reality; and I can assure you my heart bounds at the thought of once more escaping from my confinement, and breathing the pure air of heaven, without fearing a blight or a consumption in every breeze. Spring! What pleasure does that magic syllable convey to the heart of an invalid, laden with sweet promises, and bringing before his mind visions of liberty, which those who are always free cannot enjoy. Thus do I dream of summer I may never see, and make myself happy for hours in anticipating pleasures I may never share. It is an idle employment, and little calculated to sweeten disappointment. But it has opened to me many sources of delight otherwise unknown; and when out of humor with the present, I have only to send

fancy flower-gathering in the future, and I find myself fully repaid. Dear mother's health has also been much better than we had feared, and her ill turns less frequent and severe. She sits up most of the day, walks around the lower part of the house, and enjoys her book and her pen as much as ever. . . . You speak of your intercourse with Mrs. Jameson. It must indeed be an exquisite pleasure to be intimately associated with a mind like hers. I have never seen anything but extracts from her writings, but must obtain and read them. I suppose the world is anxiously looking for her next volume. . . . We have been reading Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. Is it not a deeply interesting work? In what a beautiful light it represents the character of that great and good man. No one can read his life or his works without loving and venerating him. As to "the waters of Helicon," we have but a few niggardly streams in this, our matter-of-fact village; and father in his medical capacity has forbidden my partaking of them as freely as I could wish. But no matter, they have been frozen up, and will flow in 'streams more salubrious' beneath the milder sky of spring."

In all her letters we find a solicitude about her mother's health, rather than about her own,

and indeed it was difficult to say which was most precarious.

The following extract from a poem written about this time to "Her Mother on her Fiftieth Birthday," presents a beautiful portrait, and does honor to the filial hand that drew it:

"Yes, mother, fifty years have fled,
With rapid footsteps, o'er thy head;
Have past with all their motley train,
And left thee on thy couch of pain!
How many smiles and sighs and tears,
How many hopes and doubts and fears
Have vanished with that lapse of years.

Oh, that we all could look, like thee,
Back on that dark and tideless sea,
And 'mid its varied records find
A heart at ease with all mankind,
A firm and self-approving mind.
Grief that had broken hearts less fine
Hath only served to strengthen thine;

Time, that doth chill the fancy's play,
Hath kindled thine with purer ray;
And stern disease, whose icy dart
Hath power to chill the breaking heart,
Hath left thine warm with love and truth
As in the halcyon days of youth."

The following letter was written on the 26th of March, to a female cousin resident in New York:

"DEAR KATE,—

"This day I am fifteen, and you can, you will, readily pardon and account for the absurd flights of my pen, by supposing that my tutelary spirits, Nonsense and Folly, have assembled around the being of their creation, and claimed the day as exclusively their own; then I pray you to lay to their account all that I have already scribbled, and believe that, uninfluenced by these grinning deities, I can think and feel and love, as I love you, with all warmth and sincerity of heart. Do you remember how we used to look forward to sweet fifteen, as the pinnacle of human happiness, the golden age of existence? You have but lately passed that milestone in the highway of life; I have just reached it, but I find myself no better satisfied to stand still than before, and look forward to the continuance of my journey with the same ardent longing I felt at fourteen.

"Ah, Kate, here we are, two young travellers, starting forth upon our long pilgrimage, and knowing not whither it may conduct us! *You* some months my superior in age, and many years in acquaintance with society, in external attractions, and all those accomplishments necessary to form an elegant woman. *I*, knowing nothing of life but from books, and a small circle of friends, who love me as I love them;

looking upon the *past* as a faded dream, which I shall have time enough to study and expound when old age and sorrow come on; upon the *present* as a nursling,—a preparative for the *future;* and upon that future, as what? a mighty whirlpool, of hopes and fears, of bright anticipations and bitter disappointments, into which I shall soon plunge, and find there, in common with the rest of the world, my happiness or misery. . . ."

The following, to a young friend, was also written on the 26th of March:

"My Dear H.,—

"You must know that winter has come and gone, and neither mother nor myself have felt a single breeze which could not force its way through the thick walls of our little dwelling. Do you not think I am looking gladly forward to April and May, as the lovely sisters who are to unlock the doors of our prison-house, and give us once more to the free enjoyment of Nature, without fearing a blight or a consumption in every breath? And now for another, and even more delightful anticipation —your visit! Are you indeed coming? And when are you coming? Do answer the first, that I may for once have the pleasure of framing

delightful visions without finding them dashed to the ground by the iron hand of Reality, and the last, that I may not expect you too soon, and thus subject myself to all the bitterness of 'hope deferred.' Come, for I have so much to say to you, that I cannot possibly contain it until summer; and come quickly, unless you are willing to account for my wasted time as well as your own, for I shall do little else but dream of you and your visit until the time of your arrival. You cannot imagine how those few words in your little *good for nothing* letter have completely upset my wonted gravity. Do not disappoint me. It is true, mother and I are both feeble and unable to go out with you and show you the lions of our little village, but if warm welcomes can atone for the want of ceremony, you shall have them in abundance; but it seems to me that I shall want to pin you down in a chair, and do nothing but look at you from morning till night. As to coming to Plattsburgh, I think if we cannot do so in the spring (which is doubtful), we certainly shall in the course of the summer. Brother M. wrote to me yesterday, saying that he would spend the month of August in the country, and if nothing occurred to prevent, we would take our delightful trip by the way of Lake George. Oh, it will be so pleasant! but my anticipations

are now all bent upon a nearer object. Do not allow a slight impediment to destroy them. We expect in May to move to Saratoga. We shall then have a more convenient house, better society, and the benefit of a school in which I can practise music and drawing, without being obliged to attend regularly. We shall then be a few miles nearer to you, and at present even that seems something desirable to me. I have read and own three volumes of Scott's *Life*, and was much disappointed to find that it was not finished in these three, but concluded the remainder had not yet come out. Are the five volumes all? It is indeed a deeply interesting work. I am very fond of biography, for surely there can be nothing more delightful or instructive than to trace in the infancy and youth of every noble mind the germs of its future greatness. Have you read a work called *Letters from Palmyra*, by Mr. Ware of New York? I have not yet seen it, but intend to do so soon. It is written in the character of a citizen of Rome at that early period, and it is said to be a lively picture of the manners and customs of the Imperial City, and still more of the magnificence of Palmyra and its splendid queen, Zenobia. It also contains a beautiful story. I have lately been re-perusing many of Scott's novels, and intend to finish

them. Was ever anything half so fascinating? Oh, how I long to have you here and tell you all these little things in person. Do write to me immediately, and tell me when we may expect you. I shall open your next with a beating heart. Do excuse all the blunders and scrawls of this hasty letter. You must receive it as a proof of friendship, for to a stranger, or one who I thought would look upon it with a cold and critical eye, I certainly should not send it. I believe you and I have entered into a tacit agreement to forgive any little mistakes which the other may chance to commit.

"Croyez moi ma chère amie votre,

"MARGUERITE."

The spirits of this most sensitive little being became more and more excited with the opening of spring. "She watched," says her mother, "the putting forth of the tender grass and the young blossoms as the period which was to liberate her from captivity. She was pleased with everybody and everything. She loved everything in Nature, both animate and inanimate, with a warmth of affection which displayed the benevolence of her own heart. She felt that she was well, and oh! the bright dreams and imaginings, the cloudless future, presented to her ardent mind—all was sunny and gay."

The following letter is highly expressive of the state of her feelings at that period.

"A few days since, my dearest cousin, I received your affectionate letter, and if my heart smote me at the sight of the well-known superscription, you may imagine how unmercifully it thumped on reading a letter so full of affection, and so entirely devoid of reproach for my unkindly negligence. I can assure you, my dear coz, you could have found no better way of striking home to my heart the conviction of my error; and I resolved that hour, that moment, to lay my confessions at your feet, and sue for forgiveness; I knew you were too gentle to refuse. But alas for human resolves! We were that afternoon expecting brother M. Dear brother! And how could I collect my floating thoughts and curl myself up into a corner with pen, ink, and paper before me, when my heart was flying away over the sand-hills of this unromantic region to meet and embrace and welcome home the wanderer. If it can interest you, picture to yourself the little scene,—mother and I breathless with expectation, gazing from the window, in mute suspense, and listening to the "*phiz, phiz*" of the great steam-engine. Then when we caught a rapid glance of his trim little figure, how we bounded away over chairs, sofas, and kittens,

to bestow in reality the greeting fancy had so often given him. Oh! what is so delightful as to welcome a friend! Well, three days have passed like a dream, and he is gone again. I am seated at my little table by the fire. Mother is sewing beside me. Puss is slumbering on the hearth, and nothing external remains to convince us of the truth of that bright sunbeam which had suddenly broken upon our quiet retreat, and departed like a vision as suddenly. When shall we have the pleasure of welcoming *you* thus, my beloved cousin? Your flying call of last summer was but an aggravation. Oh! may all good angels watch over you and all you love, shake the dew of health from their balmy wings upon your smiling home, and waft you hither, cheerful and happy, to sojourn awhile with the friends who love you so dearly! All hail to spring, the bright, the blooming, the renovating spring! Oh! I am so happy—I feel a lightness at my heart and a vigor in my frame that I have rarely felt. If I speak, my voice forms itself into a laugh. If I look forward, everything seems bright before me. If I look back, memory calls up what is pleasant, and my greatest desire is that my pen could fling a ray of sunshine over this scribbled page and infuse into your heart some of the cheerfulness of my own.

I have been confined to the house all winter, as it was thought the best and only way of restoring my health. Now my symptoms are all better, and I am looking forward to next month and its blue skies with the most childish impatience. By the way, I am not to be called a child any more; for yesterday I was *fifteen!* what say you to that? I feel quite like an old woman, and think of putting on caps and spectacles next month."

It was during the same exuberance of happy feeling, with the delusive idea of confirmed health and the anticipation of bright enjoyments, that she broke forth like a bird into the following strain of melody:

"Oh, my bosom is throbbing with joy,
With a rapture too full to express;
From within and without I am blest,
And the world, like myself, I would bless.

All Nature looks fair to my eye,
From beneath and around and above,
Hope smiles in the clear azure sky,
And the broad earth is glowing with love.

I stand on the threshold of life,
On the shore of its wide rolling sea;
I have heard of its storms and its strife,
But all things are tranquil to me.

There 's a veil o'er the future—'t is bright
As the wing of a spirit of air,
And each form of enchantment and light
Is trembling in iris-hues there.

I turn to the world of affection,
And warm, glowing treasures are mine ;
To the past, and my fond recollection
Gathers roses from memory's shrine.

But oh, there 's a fountain of joy
More rich than a kingdom beside,
It is holy—death cannot destroy
The flow of its heavenly tide.

'T is the love that is gushing within,
It would bathe the whole world in its light ;
The cold stream of time shall not quench it,
The dark frown of woe shall not blight.

These visions of pleasure may vanish,
These bright dreams of youth disappear,
Disappointment each air hue may banish,
And drown each frail joy in a tear.

I may plunge in the billows of life,
I may taste of its dark cup of woe,
I may weep, and the sad drops of grief
May blend with the waves as they flow.

I may dream, till reality's shadow
O'er the light form of fancy is cast ;
I may hope, until hope, too, despairing,
Has crept—to the grave of the Past.

But though the wild waters surround me,
Misfortune, temptation, and sin,
Though Fear be about and beyond me,
And Sorrow's dark shadow within;

Though Age, with an icy cold finger,
May stamp his pale seal on my brow—
Still, still in my bosom shall linger
The glow that is warming it now.

Youth will vanish, and Pleasure, gay charmer,
May depart on the wings of to-day,
But that spot in my heart shall grow warmer,
As year after year rolls away."

"While her spirits were thus light and gay," says Mrs. Davidson, "from the prospect of returning health, my more mature judgment told me that those appearances might be deceptive—that even now the destroyer might be making sure his work of destruction; but she really seemed better; the cough had subsided, her step was buoyant, her face glowed with animation, her eye was bright, and love, boundless, universal love, seemed to fill her young heart. Every symptom of her disease assumed a more favorable cast. Oh, how my heart swelled with the mingled emotions of hope, doubt, and gratitude. Our hopes of her ultimate recovery seemed to be founded upon reason, yet her father still doubted the pro-

priety of our return to Lake Champlain; and as Saratoga held out many more advantages than Ballston as a temporary residence, he decided to spend the ensuing year or two there; and then we might perhaps, without much risk, return to our much-loved and long-deserted home on the banks of the Saranac. Accordingly, a house was taken and every preparation made for our removal to Saratoga on the first of May. Margaret was pleased with the arrangement."

The following playful extract of a letter to her brother in New York, exhibits her feelings on the prospect of their change of residence:

"I now most humbly avail myself of your most gracious permission to scribble you a few lines in token of my everlasting love. 'This is to inform you I am very well, hoping these few lines will find you in possession of the same blessing'—notwithstanding the blue streaks that flitted over your pathway a few days after you left us. Perhaps it was occasioned by remorse at the cruelty of your parting speech, perhaps it was the reflection of a bright blue eye upon the deep waters of your soul; but let the cause be what it may,—'black spirits or white, blue spirits or gray,'—I hope the effect has entirely disappeared, and you are no

longer tinged with its most doleful shadow. A blue sky, a blue eye, or the blue dye of the violet, are all undeniably beautiful, but this tint when transferred from the works of Nature to the brow of man, or the stockings of woman, becomes a thing to ridicule or weep at. May your spirits henceforth, my dear brother, be preserved from this ill-omened influence, and may your feet and ankles never be graced with garments of a hue so repulsive. O brother, we are all in the heat of moving; we, I say; you will account for the use of that personal pronoun on the authority of the old proverb, 'What a dust we flies raise,' for, to be frank with you, I have little or nothing to do with it, but poor mother is over head and ears in boxes, bedclothes, carpets, straw, and discussions. Our hall is already filled with the fruits of her labors and perseverance, in the shape of certain blue chests, carpet-cases, trunks, boxes, etc., all ready for a move. Dear mother is head, hand, and feet for the whole machine; our *two helps* being nothing but cranks, which turn when you touch them, and cease their rotary movement when the force is withdrawn. Heigho. We miss our good C——, with her quick invention and helpful hand. . . . O my dear brother, I am anticipating so much pleas-

ure next summer, I hope it will not all prove a dream. It will be so delightful when you come up in August and bring cousin K—— with you; tell her I am calculating upon this pleasure with all my powers of fore-enjoyment —tell her also that I am waiting most impatiently for that annihilating letter of hers, and if it does not come soon, I shall send her another cannonade, ere she has recovered the stunning effects of the first. Oh dear! I have written you a most dis-understandable letter, and now you must excuse me, as I have declared war against M——, and after mending my pen, must collect all my scattered ideas into a fleet, and launch them for a combat upon a whole sea of ink."

"The exuberance of her spirit," says her mother, "as the spring advanced, and she was enabled once more to take exercise in the open air, displayed itself in everything. Her heart was overflowing with thankfulness and love. Every fine day in the latter part of April she either rode on horseback or drove out in a carriage. All nature looked lovely to her; not a tree or shrub but conveyed some poetical image or moral lesson to her mind. The moment, however, that she began to take daily exercise in the open air, I again heard with

agony the prophetic cough. I felt that all was over! She thought that she had taken cold, and our friends were of the same opinion. 'It was a slight cold which would vanish beneath the mild influence of spring.' I, however, feared that her father's hopes might have blinded his judgment, and upon my own responsibility consulted a skilful physician, who had on many former occasions attended her. She was not aware of my present alarm, or that the physician was now consulted. He managed in a playful manner to feel her pulse, without her suspicions. After he had left the room, 'Madam,' said he, 'it is useless to hold out any false hopes; your daughter has a seated consumption, which is, I fear, beyond the reach of medical skill. There is no hope in the case; make her as happy and as comfortable as you can; let her enjoy riding in pleasant weather, but her walks must be given up; walking is too great an exertion for her.' With an aching heart I returned to the lovely unconscious victim, and found her tying on her hat for a ramble. I gently tried to dissuade her from going. She caught my eye, and read there a tale of grief, which she could not understand, and I could not explain. As soon as I dared trust my voice, I said, 'My dear Margaret, nothing has happened, only I have just

been speaking with Dr. ——, respecting you, and he advises that you give up walking altogether. Knowing how much you enjoy it, I am pained to mention this, for I know that it will be a great privation.' 'Why, mamma,' she exclaimed, 'this cold is wearing off; may I not walk then?" 'The Doctor thinks you should make no exertion of that kind, but riding in fine weather may have a happy effect.' She stood and gazed upon my face long and earnestly; then untied her hat and sat down, apparently ruminating upon what had passed; she asked no questions, but an expression of thoughtfulness clouded her brow during the rest of the day. It was settled that she was to ride out in fine weather, but not to walk out at all, and in a day or two she seemed to have forgotten the circumstance altogether. The return of the cough and profuse night-perspirations too plainly told me her doom; but I still clung to the hope, that, as she suffered no pain, she might, by tender, judicious treatment, continue yet for years. I urged her to remit her labors; she saw how much my heart was in the request, and promised to comply with my wishes. On the first of May we removed to Saratoga. One short half-hour in the railroad car completed the journey, and she arrived, fresh, cheerful, and blooming, in her appear-

ance, such an effect had the excitement of pleasure upon her lovely face.

"On the day we left Ballston she wrote a 'Parting Word' to Mrs. H., who had been one of our most intimate and affectionate visitors throughout the winter, and whose husband had assisted her much in her studies of moral philosophy, as well as delighted her by his varied and instructive conversation."

A PARTING WORD TO MY DEAR MRS. H.

BALLSTON SPA, *April* 30, 1883.

At length the awful morn hath come,
The parting hour is nigh,
And I sit down 'mid dust and gloom,
To bid you brief "good-by."

Each voice to Fancy's listening ear
Repeats the doleful cry,
And the bare walls and sanded floor
Re-echo back "good-by."

So must it be! but many a thought
Comes crowding on my mind,
Of the dear friends, the happy hours,
The joys we leave behind.

How we shall miss your cheerful face,
Forever bright and smiling,
And your sweet voice so often heard
Our weary hours beguiling!

How shall we miss the kindly hearts,
  Which none can know unloving,
Whose thoughts and feelings none can read,
  Nor find his own improving!

And he, whose converse, hour by hour,
  Hath lent old Time new pinions,
Whose hand hath drawn the shadowy veil
  From Wisdom's broad dominions;

Whose voice hath poured forth priceless gems,
  Scarce conscious that he taught,
Whose mind of broad, of loftiest reach,
  Hath showered down thought on thought.

True, we may meet with many a dear
  And cherished friend, but yet
Oft shall we cast a backward glance
  Of wistful, vain regret.

When evening spreads her sombre veil,
  To fold the slumbering earth,
When our small circle closes round
  The humble, social hearth,—

Oft shall we dream of hours gone by,
  And con these moments o'er,
Till we half bend our ears to catch
  Your footsteps at the door,
And then turn back and sigh to think
  We hear those steps no more!

But though these dismal thoughts arise,
  Hope makes me happy still;
There is a drop of comfort lurks
  In every draught of ill!

By pain and care each joy of earth
More exquisite is made,
And when we meet, the parting grief
Shall doubly be o'erpaid.

In disappointments deep too quick
Our fairest prospects drown;
Let not this hope which blooms so bright,
Be withered at his frown!

Come, and a mother's pallid cheek
Shall brighten at your smile,
And her poor frame, so faint and weak,
Forget its pains the while.

Come, and a glad and happy heart
Shall give the welcome kiss,
And puss shall purr, and frisk, and mew,
In token of her bliss.

Come, and behold how I improve
In dusting—cleaning—sweeping,
And I will hear, with patient ear,
Your lectures on house-keeping.

And now, may all good angels guard
Your path, where'er it lie,
May peace reign monarch in your breast,
And gladness in your eye.

And may the dews of health descend
On him you cherish best,
To his worn frame their influence lend,
And calm each nerve to rest!

And may we meet again! nor feel
The parting hour so nigh;
Peace, love, and happiness to all,
Once more—once more "good-by!"

"She interested herself," continued Mrs. Davidson, "more than I had anticipated in the arrangement of our new habitation and in forming plans of future enjoyment with our friends, when they should visit us; I exerted myself to please her taste in everything, although she was prohibited from making the slightest physical exertion herself. The house settled, then came the flower-garden, in which she spent more time than I thought prudent; but she was so happy while thus engaged, and the weather being fine, and the gardener disposed to gratify her and carry all her little plans into effect, I, like a weak mother, wanted resolution to interfere, and have always reproached myself for it, although not conscious that it was an injury at the time. Her brother had invited her to return to New York with him when he came to visit us in June, and she was now impatiently counting the days until his arrival. Her feelings are portrayed in a letter to her young friend H."

"SARATOGA, *June* 1, 1838.

"June is at last with us, my dear cousin, and the blue-eyed goddess could not have looked

upon the green bosom of her mother earth, attired in a lovelier or more enchanting robe. I am seated by an open window, and the breeze, laden with the perfumes of the blossoms and opening leaves, just lifts the edge of my sheet, and steals with the gentlest footsteps imaginable to fan my cheek and forehead. The grass, tinged with the deepest and freshest green, is waving beneath its influence; the birds are singing their sweetest songs; and as I look into the depths of the clear blue sky the rich tints appear to flit higher and higher as I gaze, till my eye seems searching into immeasurable distance. Oh! such a day as this, it is a luxury to breathe. I feel as if I could frisk and gambol like my kitten from the mere consciousness of life. Yet with all the loveliness around me I re-peruse your letter, and long for wings to fly from it all to the dull atmosphere and crowded highways of the city. Yes! I could then look into your eyes and I should forget the blue sky; and your smile and your voice would doubly compensate me for the loss of green trees and singing birds. There are green trees in the heart which shed a softer perfume, and birds which sing more sweetly. 'Nonsense, Mag is growing sentimental'; I knew you would say so, but the streak came across me, and you have it at full length. In

plainer terms, how delighted, how more than delighted I shall be when I do come! when I do come, Kate! Oh! oh! oh! What would our language be without interjections, those expressive parts of speech which say so much in so small a compass? Now I am sure you can understand from these three syllables all the pleasure, the rapture I anticipate; the meeting, the parting, all the component parts of that great whole which I dominate a visit to New York! No, not to New York! but to the few dear friends whose society will afford me all the enjoyment I expect or desire, and who, in fact, constitute all my New York.

June 2. I had written thus far, dear Kate, when I was most agreeably interrupted by a proposal for a ride on horseback; my sheet slid of itself into the open drawer, my hat and dress flew on as if by instinct, and in ten minutes I was galloping full speed through the streets of our little village, with father by my side. I rode till nearly tea-time, and came home tired, tired, tired. Oh, I ache to think of it. My poor letter slept all night as soundly as its writer, but now that another day has dawned the very opposite of its predecessor, damp, dark, and rainy, I have drawn it forth from its receptacle, and seek to dissipate all outward gloom, by communing with one the

thought of whom conveys to my mind anything but melancholy. O Kate, Kate, in spite of your disinterested and sober advice to the contrary, I shall come, I shall soon come, just as soon as M. can and will run up for me. Yet perhaps in the end I shall be disappointed. My happy anticipations resemble the cloudless sky of yesterday, and who knows but a stormy to-morrow may erase the brilliant tints of hope as well as those of Nature? . . . Do write quickly and tell me if I am to prepare. If you continue to feel as when you last wrote and still advise me not to come, I shall dispose of your advice in the most approved manner, throw it to the winds, and embark armed and equipped for your city to make my destined visit, and fulfil its conditions by fair means or foul, and bring you home in triumph. Oh! we shall have fine times. Oh, dear, I blush to look back upon my sheet and see so many I's in it."

"The time of her brother's coming drew near. He would be with us at nine in the morning. At eleven they were to start. I prepared all for her departure with my own hand, lest, should I trust it to a domestic to make the arrangements, she would make some exertion herself. She sat by me whilst thus engaged,

relating playful anecdotes until I urged her to retire for the night. On going into her room an hour or two afterwards, I was alarmed to find her in a high fever. About midnight she was taken with bleeding at the lungs. I flew to her father, and in a few minutes a vein was opened in her arm. To describe our feelings at this juncture is impossible. We stood gazing at each other in mute despair. After that shock had subsided her father retired, and I seated myself by the bedside to watch her slumbers, and the rising sun found me still at my post. She awoke, pale, feeble, and exhausted by the debilitating perspiration which attended her sleep. She was surprised to find that I had not been in bed; but when she attempted to speak I laid my finger upon her lips and desired her to be silent. She understood my motive, and when I bent my head to kiss her, I saw a tear upon her cheek. I told her the necessity of perfect quiet, and the danger which would result from agitation. Before her brother came she desired to rise. I assisted her to do so, and he found her quietly seated in her easy-chair, perfectly composed in manner, and determined not to increase her difficulties by giving way to feelings which must at that time have oppressed her heart. My son was greatly shocked to find her in this

state. I met him and urged the importance of perfect self-possession on his part, as any sudden agitation might in her present alarming state be fatal. Poor fellow! he subdued his feelings and met her with a cheerful smile which concealed a heart almost bursting with sorrow. The propriety of her taking this jaunt had been discussed by her father and myself for a number of weeks. We both thought her too ill to leave home, but her strong desire to go, the impression she had imbibed that travelling would greatly benefit her health, and the pleading of friends in her behalf, on the ground that disappointment would have a more unfavorable effect than the journey possibly could have, all had their effect in leading us to consent. It was possible it might be of use to her, although it was at best an experiment of a doubtful nature. But this attack was decisive; yet caution must be used in breaking the matter to her in her present weak state. Her brother stayed a day or two with us, and then returned, telling her that when she was able to perform the journey, he would come again and take her with him. After he left us, she soon regained her usual strength, and in a fortnight her brother returned and took her to New York."

The anxiety of Mrs. Davidson was intense

until she received her first letter. It was written from New York, and in a cheerful vein, speaking encouragingly of her health, but showing more solicitude about the health and well-being of her mother than of her own. She continued to write frequently, giving animated accounts of scenes and persons.

The following extract relates to an excursion in company with two of her brothers, into Westchester County, one of the pleasantest and, until recently, the least fashionably known regions on the banks of the Hudson.

"At three o'clock we were in the Sing-Sing steamer, with the water sparkling below, and the sun broiling overhead. In the course of our sail a huge thunder-cloud arose, and I retreated, quite terrified, to the cabin. But it proved a refreshing shower. Oh! how sweet, how delightful the air was. When we landed at the dock, everything looked so fresh and green! We mounted into a real country vehicle, and rattled up the hill to the village inn, a quiet, pleasant little house. I was immediately shown to my room, where I staid until tea-time, enjoying the prospect of a splendid sunset upon the mountains, and resting after the fatigues of the day. At seven we drank tea, a meal strongly contrasted with the fashionable, meagre, unsocial city tea.

The table was crowded with everything good, in the most bountiful style, and served with the greatest attention by the landlord's pretty daughter. I retired soon after tea, and slept soundly until daybreak. After breakfast we sent for a carriage to take us along the course of the Croton, to see the famous water-works; but, to our disappointment, every carriage was engaged, and we could not go. In the afternoon a party was made up to go in a boat across the river, and ascend a mountain to a singular lake upon its summit, where all the implements of fishing were provided, and a collation was prepared. In short, it was a picnic. To this we were invited, but on learning they would not return until nine or ten in the evening, that scheme also was abandoned. Towards night we walked around the village, looked at the tunnel, and visited the ice-cream man; and in spite of my various disappointments, I retired quite happy and pleased with my visit. The next day was Sunday, and we proposed going to the little Dutch church, a few miles distant, and hearing the service performed in Dutch; but lo! on drawing aside my curtains in the morning it rained, and we were obliged to content ourselves as well as we could until the rain was over. After dinner the sun again peeped out, as if

for our especial gratification, and in a few minutes a huge country wagon, with a leathern top and two sleek horses, drew up to the door. We mounted into it, and away we rattled over the most beautiful country I ever saw. Oh! it was magnificant! Every now and then the view of the broad Hudson, with its distant hills, and the clouds resting on their summits, burst upon our view. Now we would ascend a lofty hill, clothed with forests and verdure of the most brilliant hues; now dash down into a deep ravine, with a stream winding and gurgling along its bed, with its tiny waves rushing over the wheel of some rustic mill, embosomed in its shade and solitude. Every now and then the gable-end of some low Dutch building would present itself before us, smiling in its peaceful stillness, and conveying to the mind a perfect picture of rural simplicity and comfort, although, perhaps, of ignorance. At length we paused upon the summit of a gentle hill, and judge of my delight when I beheld below me the old Dutch church, the quiet, secluded, beautiful little church-yard, the running stream, the path, and the rustic bridge, the ever-memorable scene of Ichabod's adventure with the *headless horseman*. There, thought I, rushed the poor pedagogue, his knees cramped up to

The Old Dutch Church, Sleepy Hollow.

From a drawing by W. J. Wilson.

kisses, and soon found ourselves once more, after this charming episode, approaching the mighty city. We had a delightful sail of two or three hours, and again rode up to dear aunt M.'s where all seemed glad at my return. I spent the remainder of the day in resting and reading."

"In these artless epistles," continues Mrs. Davidson, "there is much of character; for who could imagine this constant cheerfulness, this almost forgetfulness of self, these affectionate endeavors, by her sweetly playful account of all her employments while absent, to dispel the grief which she knew was preying upon my mind on account of her illness. Who could conceive the pains she took to conceal from me the ravages which disease was daily making upon her form. She was never heard to complain, and in her letters to me she hardly alludes to her illness. The friends to whom I had entrusted her, during her short period of absence, sometimes feared that she would never be able to reach home again. Her brother told me, but not until long after her return, that on her way home she really fainted several times from debility, and that he took her from the boat to the carriage as he would have done an infant.

"On the 6th of July I once more folded to

my heart this cherished object of my solicitude, but, oh, the change which three short weeks had wrought in her appearance struck me forcibly. I was so wholly unprepared for it that I nearly fainted. After the excitement of the meeting (which she had evidently summoned all her fortitude to bear with composure) was over, she sat down by me, and passing her thin arm around my waist, said, 'O my dear mamma, I am home again at last; I now feel as if I never wanted to leave you again; I have had a delightful visit, my friends were all glad to see me, and have watched over me with all the kindness and care which affection could dictate; but oh, there is no place like home, and no care like a mother's care; there is something in the very air of home and in the sound of your voice, mother, which makes me happier just now than all the scenes which I have passed through in my little jaunt; oh, after all, home is the only place for a person as much out of health as I am.' I strove to suppress my emotions, while I marked her pale cheek and altered countenance. She fixed her penetrating eyes upon my face, kissed me, and drawing back to take a more full survey of the effects which pain and anxiety had wrought in me, kissed me again and again, saying; 'she knew I had deeply felt the want of her society,

and now once more at home, she should so prize its comforts as to be in no haste to leave it again.' She was much wasted, and could hardly walk from one room to another; her cough was very distressing; she had no pain, but a languor and a depression of spirits, foreign to her nature. She struggled against this debility, and called up all the energies of her mind to overcome it; her constant reply to inquiries about her health, by the friends who called, was the same as formerly, 'Well, quite well—mother calls me an invalid, but I feel well.' Yet to me, when alone, she talked more freely of her symptoms, and I thought I could discern from her manner, that she had apprehensions as to the result. I had often endeavored to acquire firmness sufficient to tell her what was her situation, but she seemed so studiously to avoid the disclosure, that my resolution had hitherto been unequal to the task. But I was much surprised one day, not long after her return from New York, by her asking me to tell her without reserve my opinion of her state; the question wrung my very heart. I was wholly unprepared for it, and it was put in so solemn a manner that I could not evade it, were I disposed to do so. I knew with what strong affection she clung to life and the objects and friends which endeared it to

her ; I knew how bright the world upon which she was just entering appeared to her young fancy, what glowing pictures she had drawn of future usefulness and happiness. I was now called upon at one blow to crush these hopes, to destroy the delightful visions which had hovered around her from her cradle until this very period ; it would be cruel and wrong to deceive her ; in vain I attempted a reply to her direct and solemn appeal, and my voice grew husky ; several times I essayed to speak, but the words died away on my lips ; I could only fold her to my heart in silence, imprint a kiss upon her forehead, and leave the room to avoid agitating her with feelings I had no power to repress.

"The following extract from a letter to her brother in New York, dated a short time after this incident occurred, and which I never saw until after her departure, will best portray her own feelings at this period :

" ' As to my health at present, I feel as well as when you were here, and the cough is much abated ; but it is evident to me that mother thinks me not so well as before I left home ; I do not myself believe that I have gained anything from the visit, and in a case like mine, standing still is certainly loss, but I feel no worse. However, I have learned that feelings

are no criterion of disease. Now, brother, I want to know what Dr. M—— discovered, or thought he discovered, in his examination of my lungs; father says nothing—mother, when I ask, cannot tell me, and looks so sad! Now I ask you, hoping to be answered. If you have not heard the Doctor say, I wish you would ask him, and write to me. If it is more unfavorable than I anticipate, it is best I should know now; if it is the contrary, how much pain and restlessness and suspicion will be spared me by the knowledge. As to myself, I feel and know that my health is in a most precarious state, that the disease we dread has perhaps fastened upon me; but I have an impression that if I make use of the proper remedies and exercise, I may yet recover a tolerable degree of health. I do not feel that my case is incurable; I wish to know if I am wrong. I have rode on horseback twice since you left me; dear, dear brother, what a long egotistic letter I have written you; do forgive me; my heart was full, and I felt that I must unburden it. I wish you would write me a long letter. Do not let mother know at present the questions I have asked you. . . .'

"From this period she grew more thoughtful. There was even a solemnity in her manner which I never before observed. Her mind,

as I mentioned before, had been much perplexed by some doctrinal points. To solve these doubts, I asked if I should not send for some clergyman. She said no. She had heard many discussions on these subjects, and they had always served rather to confuse than to convince her. 'I would rather converse with you alone, mother.' She then asked me if I thought it essential to salvation that she should adopt any particular creed. I felt that I was an inefficient, perhaps a blind guide, yet it was my duty not only to impart consolation, but to explain to her my own views of the truth. I replied that I considered faith and repentance only to be essential to salvation; that it was very desirable that her mind should be settled upon some particular mode of faith; but that I did not think it absolutely necessary that she should adopt the tenets of any established church, and again recommended an attentive perusal of the New Testament. She expressed her firm belief in the divinity of Christ. The perfections of His character, its beauty and holiness excited her admiration, while the benevolence which prompted the sacrifice of Himself to save a lost world filled her with the most enthusiastic gratitude. It was a source of regret that so much of her time had been spent in light reading, and that her writings

had not been of a more decidedly religious character. She lamented that she had not chosen scriptural subjects for the exercise of her poetical talent, and said, 'Mamma, should God spare my life, my time and talents shall for the future be devoted to a higher and holier end.' She felt that she had trifled with the gifts of Providence, and her self-condemnation and grief were truly affecting. 'And must I die so young!—my career of usefulness hardly commenced? O mother, how sadly have I trifled with the gifts of Heaven! What have I done which can benefit one human being?' I folded her to my heart, and endeavored to soothe the tumult of her feelings, bade her remember her dutiful conduct as a daughter, her affectionate bearing as a sister and friend, and the consolation which she had afforded me through years of suffering! 'O my mother,' said she, 'I have been reflecting much of late upon this sad waste of intellect, and had marked out for myself a course of usefulness which, should God spare my life'—Here her emotions became too powerful to proceed. At times she suffered much anxiety with regard to her eternal welfare, and deeply lamented her want of faithfulness in the performance of her religious duties; complained of coldness and formality in her devotional exercises and en-

treated me to pray with and for her. At other times her hope of heaven would be bright, her faith unwavering, and her devotion fervent. Yet it was evident to me that she still cherished the hope that her life might be prolonged. Her mother had lingered for years in a state equally hopeless, and during that period had been enabled to attend to the moral and religious culture of her little family. Might not the same kind Providence prolong *her life?* It would be vain to attempt a description of those seasons of deep and thrilling interest. God alone knows in what way my own weak frame was sustained. I felt that she had been renovated and purified by Divine Grace, and to see her thus distressed when I thought that all the consolations of the Gospel ought to be hers, gave my heart a severe pang. Many of our friends now were of opinion that a change of climate might benefit, perhaps restore her. Heretofore, when the suggestion had been made, she shrunk from the idea of leaving her home for a distant clime. Now her anxiety to try the effect of a change was great. I felt that it would be vain, although I was desirous that nothing should be left untried. Feeble as she now was, the idea of her resigning the comforts of home and being subject to the fatigues of travelling in public conveyances was a

dreadful one; yet if there was a rational prospect of prolonging her life by these means, I was anxious to give them a trial. Dr. Davidson, after much deliberation on the subject, called counsel. Dr. —— came, and when, after half an hour's pleasant and playful conversation with Margaret, he joined us in the parlor, oh! how my poor heart trembled. I hung upon the motions of his lips as if my own life depended on what they might utter. At length he spoke, and I felt as if an ice-bolt had passed through my heart. He had never thought, although he had known her many years, that a change of climate would benefit her. She had lived beyond his expectations many months, even years; and now he was convinced, were we to attempt to take her to a Southern climate, that she would die on the passage. Make it as pleasant as possible for her at home, was his advice. He thought that a few months must terminate her life. She knew that we had confidence in the opinion of this, her favorite physician. When I had gained firmness enough to answer her questions, I again entered the room and found her composed, although she had evidently been strongly agitated, and had not brought her mind to hear her doom. Never, oh! never to the latest hour of my life, shall I forget the look

she gave me when I met her. What a heart-rending task was mine! I performed it as gently as possible. I said the Doctor thought her strength unequal to the fatigue of the journey; that he was not so great an advocate for change of climate as many persons; that he had known many cases in which he thought it injurious, and his best advice was that we should again ward off the severity of the winter by creating an atmosphere within our house. She mildly acquiesced, and the subject was dropped altogether. She sometimes read, and frequently from mere habit held a book in her hand when unable to digest its contents, and within the book there usually rested a piece of paper, upon which she occasionally marked the reflections which arose in her mind, either in poetry or prose.

"The following fragments appear to be the very breathings of her soul during the last few weeks of her life—written in pencil, in a hand so weak and tremulous that I could with difficulty decipher them word by word, with the aid of a strong magnifying-glass.

"'Consumption! child of woe, thy blighting breath
Marks all that's fair and lovely for thine own,
And, sweeping o'er the silver chords of life,
Blends all their music in one death-like tone.
What strange, what mystic things we are,

With spirits longing to outlive the stars.
. . . . . but even in decay.
Hasting to meet our brethren in the dust.
As one small dew-drop runs, another drops
To sink unnoticed in the world of waves.

Oh, it is sad to feel that when a few short years
Of life are past, we shall lie down, unpitied
And unknown, amid a careless world;
That youth and age and revelry and grief
Above our heads shall pass, and we alone
Shall sleep! alone shall be as we have been,
No more. . . .'

"These are unfinished fragments, a part of which I could not decipher at all. I insert them to give an idea of the daily operations of her mind during the whole of this long summer of suffering. Her gentle spirit never breathed a murmur or complaint. I think she was rarely heard to express even a feeling of weariness. But here are a few more of those outpourings of the heart. I copy these little effusions with all their errors; there is a sacredness about them which forbids the change even of a single letter. The first of the fragments which follow was written on a Sabbath evening in autumn, not many weeks before her death.

"'It is autumn, the season of rapid decay,
When the flow'rets of summer are hasting away
From the breath of the wintry blast,

And the buds which oped to the gazer's eye,
And the glowing tints of the gorgeous sky,
And the forests robed in their emerald dye,
With their loveliest blossoms have past.

'T is eve, and the brilliant sunset hue
Is replaced by a sky of the coldest blue,
Untouched by a floating cloud.
And all Nature is silent, calm, and serene,
As though sorrow and suffering never had been
On this beautiful earth abroad.
' T is a Sabbath eve, and the longing soul
Is charmed by its quiet and gentle control
From each wayward and wandering thought,
And it longs from each meaner affection to move,
And it soareth the troubles of earth above,
To bathe in that fountain of light and love,
Whence our purest enjoyments are caught.'

[1838.]

" ' But winter, oh what shall thy greeting be
From our waters, our earth, and our sky;
What welcoming strain shall arise for thee
As thy chariot-wheels draw nigh ?
Alas! the fresh flowers of the spirit decay
As thy cold, cold steps advance,
And even young Fancy is shrinking away
From the chill of thy terrible glance;
And Hope with her mantle of rainbow hue
Hath fled from thy freezing eye,
And her bright train of visions are melting in air
As thy shivering blasts sweep by.
Thy . . .'

[*Oct.* 1838.]

" 'The nature of the soul,
The spirit, what is it? Mysterious, sublime,
Undying, unchanging, forever the same,
It bounds lightly athwart the dark billows of time,
And moves on unscorched by its heavenly flame.

Man owns thee, and feels thee, and knows thee divine;
He feels thou art his, and thou never canst die;
He believes thee a gem from the Maker's pure shrine,
A portion of purity holy and high.

'T is around him, within him, the source of his life,
Yet too weak to contemplate its glory and might;
He trembling shrinks back to dull earth's humble strife,
And leaves the pure atmosphere glowing with light.

Thou spark from the Deity's radiant throne,
I know thee, yet shrink from thy greatness and power,
Thou art mine in thy splendor, I feel thee my own,
Yet behold me as frail as the light summer flower.

I strive in my weakness to gaze on thy might,
To trace out thy wanderings through ages to come,
Till like birds on the sea, all exhausted, at length
I flutter back weary to earth as my home.

Like a diamond when laid in a rough case of clay,
Which may crumble and wear from the pure gem enclosed,
But which ne'er can be lit by one tremulous ray
From the glory crowned star in its dark case reposed.'

"As the cool weather advanced, her decline became more visible, and she devoted more and more of her time to searching the Scriptures, self-examination and subjects for reflection, and questions which were to be solved by evidences deduced from the Bible. I found them but a few days before her death, in the sacred volume which lay upon the table, at which she usually sat during her hours of retirement. She had been searching the holy book, and overcome by the exertion, rang the bell which summoned me to her side, for no person but myself was admitted during the time set apart for her devotional exercises.

'Subjects for reflection:

1st. The uniform usefulness of Christ's miracles.

2d. The manner in which He overthrows all the exalted hopes which the Jews entertain of a temporal kingdom, and strives to explain to them the entire spirituality of the one He has come to erect.

3d. The deep and unchangeable love for man, which must have impelled Christ to resist so many temptations and endure so many sufferings, even death, that truth might enlighten the world, and heaven and immortality become realities instead of dreams.

4th. The general thoughtlessness of man with regard to his greatest, his only interest.

5th. Christ's constant submission to the will of His Father, and the necessity of our imitating the meek and calm and gentle qualities of His character, together with that firmness of purpose and confidence in God which sustained Him to the end.

6th. The necessity of so living, that we need not fear to think each day our last.

7th. The necessity of religion to soothe and support the mind on the bed of sickness.

8th. Self-examination.

9th. Is Christ mentioned expressly in Scripture as equal with God and a part?

10th. Is there sufficient ground for the doctrine of the Trinity?

11th. Did Christ come as a prophet and reformer of the world, or as a sacrifice for our sins, to appease the wrath of his Father?

12th. Is anything said of infant baptism?'

[Written in *November*, 1838.]

"About three weeks before her departure, I one morning found her in the parlor, where, as I before observed, she spent a portion of her time in retirement. I saw that she had been much agitated, and seemed weary. I seated myself by her and rested her head on my

bosom, while I gently pressed my hand upon her throbbing temples, to soothe the agitation of her nerves. She kissed me again and again, and seemed as if she feared to trust her voice to speak, lest her feelings should overcome her. As I returned her caresses, she silently put a folded paper in my hand. I began to open it, when she gently laid her hand on mine, and said in a low tremulous tone, 'Not now, dear mother!' I then led her back to her room, placed her upon the sofa, and retired to examine the paper. It contained the following lines:

TO MY MOTHER.

O mother, would the power were mine
To wake the strain thou lov'st to hear,
And breathe each trembling new-born thought
Within thy fondly listening ear,
As when in days of health and glee
My hopes and fancies wandered free.

But, mother, now a shade has past
Athwart my brightest visions here,
A cloud of darkest gloom has wrapt
The remnant of my brief career!
No song, no echo can I win,
The sparkling fount has died within.

The torch of earthly hope burns dim,
And Fancy spreads her wings no more,

And oh, how vain and trivial seem
  The pleasures that I prized before.
My soul, with trembling steps and slow,
  Is struggling on through doubt and strife,
Oh! may it prove as time rolls on,
  The pathway to eternal life;—
Then, when my cares and fears are o'er,
I 'll sing thee as in days of yore.

I said that hope had passed from earth,
  'T was but to fold her wings in heaven,
To whisper of the soul's new birth,
  Of sinners saved and sins forgiven.
When mine are washed in tears away,
Then shall my spirit swell my lay.

When God shall guide my soul above
By the soft cords of heavenly love,
When the vain cares of earth depart,
And tuneful voices swell my heart,
Then shall each word, each note I raise,
Burst forth in pealing hymns of praise,
And all not offered at His shrine,
Dear mother, I will place on thine.

" It was long before I could regain sufficient composure to return to her. When I did so, I found her sweetly calm, and she greeted me with a smile so full of affection, that I shall cherish the recollection of its brightness until my latest breath. It was the last piece she ever wrote, except a parody of four lines of the

hymn, 'I would not live alway,' which was written within the last week of her life.

"'I would not live always, thus fettered by sin,
Temptation without and corruption within,
With the soul ever dimmed by its hopes and its fears,
And the heart's holy flame ever struggling through tears.'"

Thus far, in preparing this memoir, we have availed ourselves almost entirely of copious memoranda, furnished us, at our request, by Mrs. Davidson; but when the narrator approached the closing scene of this most affecting story, the heart of the mother gave out, and she found herself totally inadequate to the task. Fortunately, Dr. Davidson had retained a copy of a letter, written by her in the midst of her affliction, to Miss Sedgwick, in reply to an epistle from that lady, expressive of the kindest sympathy, and making some inquiries relative to the melancholy event. We subjoin that letter entire, for never have we read anything of the kind more truly eloquent or deeply affecting.

"SARATOGA SPRINGS.

"Yes, my dear Miss Sedgwick; she is an angel now; calmly and sweetly she sunk to

her everlasting rest, as a babe gently slumbers on its mother's bosom. I thank my Father in heaven that I was permitted to watch over her, and I trust administer to her comfort during her illness. I know, my friend, you will not expect either a very minute or connected detail of the circumstances preceding her change, from me at this time, for I am indeed bowed down with sorrow. I feel that I am truly desolate, how desolate I will not attempt to describe. Yet in the depth of grief I have consolations of the purest, most soothing and exalted nature. I would not, indeed I could not murmur, but rather bless my God that he has in the plenitude of his goodness made me, even for a brief space on earth, the honored mother of such an angel. O my dear Miss Sedgwick, I wish you could have seen her during the last two months of her brief sojourn with us. Her meekness and patience, and her even cheerful bearing were unexampled. But when she was assured that all the tender and endearing ties which bound her to earth were about to be severed, when she saw that life and all its bright visions were fading from her eyes—that she was standing at the entrance of the dark valley which must be traversed in her way to the eternal world, the struggle was great, but brief,—she caught the hem of her

Saviour's robe and meekly bowed to the mandate of her God. Since the beginning of August, I have watched this tender blossom with intense anxiety and marked her decline with a breaking heart; and although from that time until the period of her departure, I never spent a whole night in bed, my excitement was so strong that I was unconscious of the want of sleep. O my dear madam, the whole course of her decline was so unlike any other death-bed scene I ever witnessed; there was nothing of the gloom of a sick-chamber; a charm was in and around her; a holy light seemed to pervade everything belonging to her. There was a sacredness, if I may so express it, which seemed to tell the presence of the Divinity. Strangers felt it, all acknowledged it. Very few were admitted to her sick-room, but those few left it with an elevation of heart new, solemn, and delightful. She continued to ride out as long as the weather was mild, and even after she became too weak to walk she frequently desired to be taken into the parlor, and when there, with all her little implements of drawing and writing, her books, and even her little work-box and basket beside her; she seemed to think that by these little attempts at her usual employments, she could conceal from me, for she saw my heart was breaking,

the ravages of disease and her consequent debility. The New Testament was her daily study, and a portion of every day was spent in private, in self-examination and prayer. My dear Miss Sedgwick, how I have felt my own littleness, my total unworthiness, when compared with this pure, this high-souled, intellectual, yet timid, humble child; bending at the altar of her God, and pleading for pardon and acceptance in his sight, and grace to assist her in preparing for eternity. As her strength wasted, she often desired me to share her hours of retirement, and converse with her and read to her, when unable to read herself. Oh! how sad, how delightful, how agonizing is the memory of the sweet and holy communion we then enjoyed. Forgive me, my friend, for thus mingling my own feelings with the circumstances you wished to know; and, oh! continue to pray that God will give me submission under this desolating stroke. She was my darling, my almost idolized child; truly, truly, you have said, the charm of my existence. Her symptoms were extremely distressing, although she suffered no pain. A week before her departure she desired that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper might be administered to her. 'Mother,' said she, 'I do not desire it because I feel worthy to receive it; I feel my-

self a sinner; but I desire to manifest my faith in Christ by receiving an ordinance instituted by himself but a short time before his crucifixion.' The Holy Sacrament was administered by Mr. Babcock. The solemnity of the scene can be better felt than described. I cannot attempt it. After it was over, a holy calm seemed to pervade her mind, and she looked almost like a beatified spirit. The evening following she said to me, 'Mother, I have made a solemn surrender of myself to God; if it is his will, I would desire to live long enough to prove the sincerity of my profession, but his will be done; living or dying I am henceforth devoted to God.' After this, some doubt seemed to intrude, her spirit was troubled. I asked her if there was anything she desired to have done, any little arrangements to be made, anything to say which she had left unsaid, and assured her that her wishes should be sacred to me. She turned her eyes upon me with an expression so sad, so mournfully sweet: 'Mother, "when I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies," then I will think of other matters.' Her hair, which when a little child had been often cut to improve its growth, was now very beautiful, and she usually took much pains with it. During the whole course of her sickness I had

taken care of it. One day, not long before her death, she said, evidently making a great effort to speak with composure, 'Mother, if you are willing I will have my hair cut off; it is troublesome; I should like it better short.' I understood her at once; she did not like to have the idea of death associated with those beautiful tresses which I had loved to braid. She would have them taken off while living. I mournfully gave my consent, and she said, 'I will not ask you, my dear mother, to do it; my friend, Mrs. F——, will be with me to-night, and she will do it for me.' The dark rich locks were severed at midnight; never shall I forget the expression of her young faded face as I entered the room. 'Do not be agitated, dear mamma, I am more comfortable now. Lay it away, if you please, and to-morrow I will arrange and dispose of it. Do you know that I view my hair as something sacred? It is a part of myself, which will be reunited to my body at the Resurrection.' She had sat in an easy-chair or reclined upon a sofa for several weeks.

"On Friday, the 22d of November, at my urgent entreaty, she consented to be laid upon the bed. She found it a relief, and sunk into a deep sleep, from which she was only awoke when I aroused her, to take some refreshment.

When she awoke she looked and spoke like an angel, but soon dropped asleep as before. Oh! how my poor heart trembled, for I felt that it was but the precursor to her long last rest, although many of our friends thought she might yet linger some weeks. A total loss of appetite and a difficulty in swallowing prevented her from taking any nourishment throughout the day, and when we placed her in the easy-chair, at night, in order to arrange her bed, I offered her some nice food, which I had prepared, and found she could not take it. My feelings amounted almost to agony. She said, 'Do not be distressed. I will take it by and by.' I seated myself beside her, and she said, 'Surely, my dear mother, you have many consolations. You are gathering a little family in heaven to welcome you.' My heart was full; when I could speak, I said, 'Yes, my love, I feel that I am indeed gathering a little family in heaven to bid you welcome, but when they are all assembled there, how dreadful to doubt whether I may ever be permitted to join the circle.' 'Oh, hush, dear, dear mother; do not indulge such sad thoughts; the fact of your having trained this little band to inhabit that holy place is sufficient evidence to me that you will not fail to join us there.' I was with her myself that night, and a friend in the

neighborhood sat up also. On Saturday morning, after I had taken half an hour's sleep, I found her quiet as a sleeping infant. I prepared her some food, and when I awoke her to take it, she said, 'Dear mother, I will try, if it is only to please you.' I fed her as I would have fed a babe. She smiled sweetly and said, 'Mother, I am again an infant.' I asked if I should read to her; she said yes, she would like to have me read a part of the Gospel of John. I did so, and then said, 'My dear Margaret, you look sweetly composed this morning. I trust all is peace within your heart.' 'Yes, mother, all is peace, sweet peace. I feel that I can do nothing for myself. I have cast my burden upon Christ.' I asked if she could rest her hopes there in perfect confidence. 'Yes,' she replied, 'Jesus will not fail me. I can trust Him.' She then sunk into a deep sleep, as on the preceding day. In the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. H. came from Ballston; they were much affected by the change a few days had made in her appearance. I awoke her, fearing she might sleep too long, and said her friends had come. She extended her arms to them both, and kissed them, saying to Mr. H. that he found her a late riser, and then sank to sleep again. Mrs. H. remained with us that night. About sunset I spoke to her.

She awoke and answered me cheerfully, but observing that I was unusually depressed, she said, ' Dear mother, I am wearing you out.' I replied, ' My child, my beloved child, it is not that; the thought of our separation fills me with anguish.' I never shall forget the expression of her sweet face, as she replied, ' Mother, my own dear mother, do not grieve. Our parting will not be long; in life we were inseparable, and I feel that you cannot live without me. You will soon join me, and we shall part no more.' I kissed her pale cheek, as I bent over her, and finding my agitation too strong to repress, I left the room. She soon after desired to get up; she said she must have a coughing fit, and she could bear it better in the chair. When there she began to cough, and her distress was beyond description; her strength was soon exhausted, and we again carried her to the bed. She coughed from six until half-past ten. I then prevailed on her to take some nutritious drink, and she fell asleep. My husband and Mrs. H. were both of them anxious that I should retire and get some rest, but I did not feel the want of it; and impressed as I was with the idea that this was the last night she would pass on earth, I could not go to bed. But others saw not the change, and to satisfy them, I went at twelve to my room, which opened

into hers. There I sat listening to every sound. All seemed quiet; I twice opened the door, and Mrs. H. said she slept, and had taken her drink as often as directed, and again urged me to go to bed. A little after two I put on my night-dress, and laid down. Between three and four Mrs. H. came in haste for ether. I pointed to the bottle, and sprang up. She said, 'I entreat, my dear Mrs. Davidson, that you do not rise; there is no sensible change, only a turn of oppression.' She closed the door, and I hastened to rise, when Mrs. H. came again, and said Margaret has asked for her mother. I flew—she held the bottle of ether in her own hand, and pointed to her breast. I poured it on her head and chest. She revived. 'I am better now,' said she. 'Mother, you tremble, you are cold; put on your clothes.' I stepped to the fire, and threw on a wrapper, when she stretched out both her arms, and exclaimed, 'Mother, take me in your arms.' I raised her, and seating myself on the bed, passed my arms around her waist; her head dropped upon my bosom, and her expressive eyes were raised to mine. That look I never shall forget; it said, 'Tell me, mother, is this death?' I answered the appeal as if she had spoken. I laid my hand upon her white brow; a cold dew had gathered there; I spoke, 'Yes, my

beloved, it is almost finished; you will soon be with Jesus.' She gave one more look, two or three short fluttering breaths, and all was over—her spirit was with its God—not a struggle or groan preceded her departure. Her father just came in time to witness her last breath. For a long half-hour I remained in the same position, with the precious form of my lifeless child upon my bosom. I closed those beautiful eyes with my own hand. I was calm. I felt that I had laid my angel from my own breast, upon the bosom of her God. Her father and myself were alone. Her Sabbath commenced in heaven. Ours was opened in deep, deep anguish. Our sons, who had been sent for, had not arrived, and four days and nights did Ellen (our young nurse, whom Margaret dearly loved) and I watch over the sacred clay. I could not resign this mournful duty to strangers. Although no son or relative was with us in this sad and solemn hour, never did sorrowing strangers meet with more sympathy than we received in this hour of affliction, from the respected inhabitants of Saratoga. We shall carry with us through life the grateful remembrance of their kindness. And now, my dear madam, let me thank you for your kind, consoling letter; it has given me consolation. My Margaret, my now angel

child, loved you tenderly. She recognized in yours a kindred mind, and I feel that her pure spirit will behold with delight your efforts to console her bereaved mother."

She departed this life on the 25th of November, 1838, aged fifteen years and eight months; her earthly remains repose in the graveyard of the village of Saratoga.

"A few days after her departure," observes Mrs. Davidson in a memorandum, "I was searching the library in the hope of finding some further memento of my lost darling, when a packet folded in the form of a letter met my eye. It was confined with a needle and thread, instead of a seal, and secured more firmly by white sewing silk, which was passed several times around it; the superscription was, 'For my Mother, Private.' Upon opening these papers, I found they contained the results of self-examination, from a very early period of her life until within a few days of its close. These results were noted and composed at different periods. They are some of the most interesting relics she has left, but they are of too sacred a nature to meet the public eye. They display a degree of self-knowledge and humility, and a depth of contrition, which could only emanate from a heart chastened and subdued by the power of divine grace."

We here conclude this memoir, which, for the most part, as the reader will perceive, is a mere transcript of the records furnished by a mother's heart. We shall not pretend to comment on these records; they need no comment, and they admit no heightening. Indeed, the further we have proceeded with our subject, the more has the intellectual beauty and the seraphic purity of the little being we have attempted to commemorate broken upon us; and the more have we shrunk at our own unworthiness for such a task. To use one of her own exquisite expressions, she was "A spirit of heaven fettered by the strong affections of earth"; and the whole of her brief sojourn here seems to have been a struggle to regain her native skies. We may apply to her a passage from one of her own tender apostrophes, to the memory of her sister Lucretia—

". . . One who came from Heaven awhile,
To bless the mourners here,
Their joys to hallow with her smile,
Their sorrow with her tear.

Who joined to all the charms of earth
The noblest gifts of Heaven,
To whom the Muses at her birth
Their sweetest smiles had given.

Whose eye beamed forth with fancy's ray,
And genius pure and high;
Whose very soul had seemed to bathe
In streams of melody.

. . . . . .

The cheeks which once so sweetly beamed
Grew pallid with decay;
The burning fire within consumed
Its tenement of clay.

Death, as if fearing to destroy,
Paused o'er her couch awhile;
She gave a tear for those she loved,
Then met him with a smile."

END OF VOLUME II.